The Houses of Hereford 1200-1700

The Houses of Hereford 1200-1700 [Retail]

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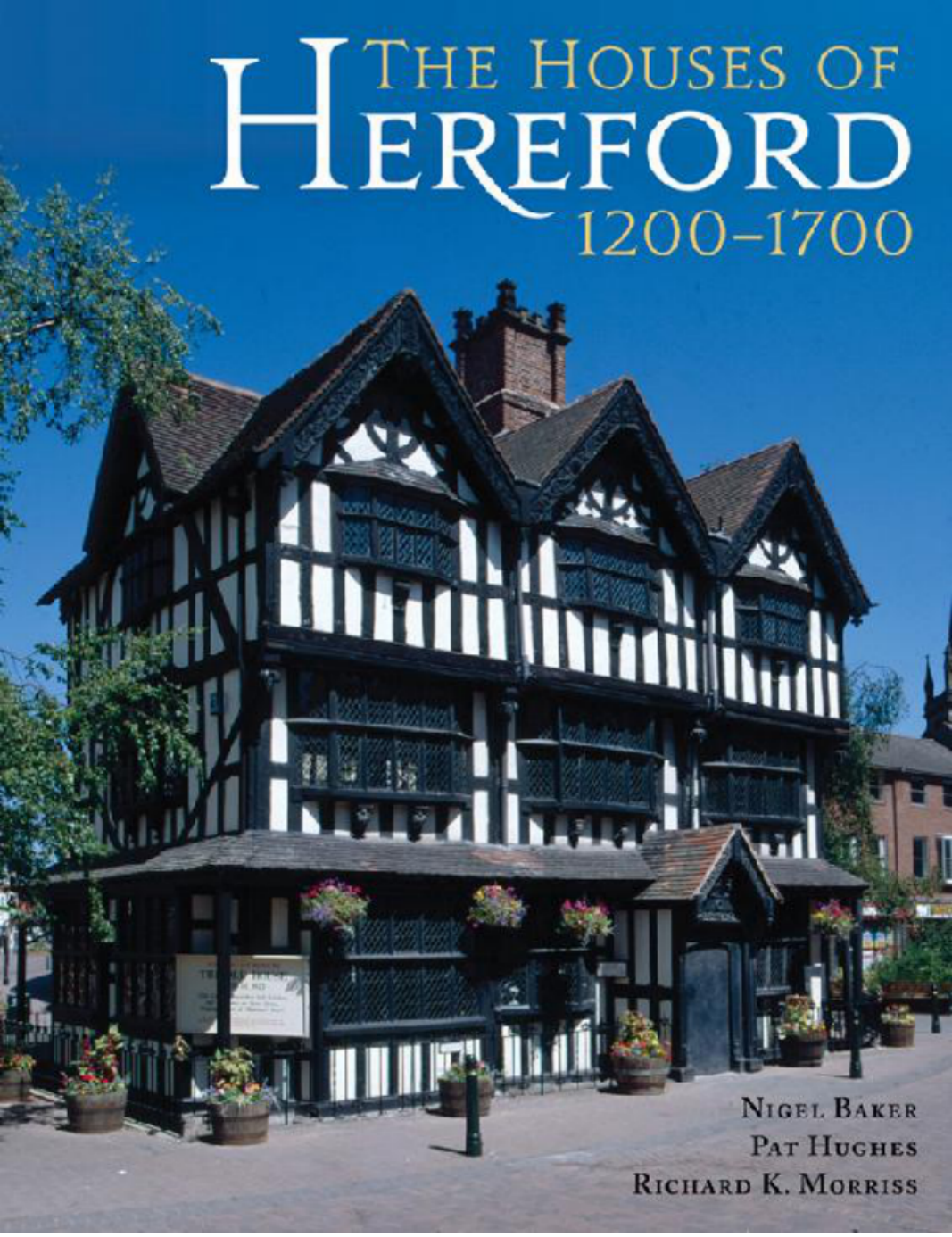
The Houses of Hereford 1200–1700



Nigel Baker
Pat Hughes
Richard K. Morriss

THE HOUSES OF HEREFORD 1200–1700

THE HOUSES OF HEREFORD 1200–1700

by

NIGEL BAKER, PAT HUGHES AND RICHARD MORRISS

Additional text by Ron Shoesmith; reconstruction drawings by Bryan Byron; original photography by Ken Hoverd; additional photography by James O. Davies; edited by Nigel Baker

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Back cover: Reconstruction by Bryan Byron of the Old Market Hall in High Town.

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Picture credits

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Summary

This volume examines in detail 24 historic buildings in the Cathedral City of Hereford. All but two of the buildings were surveyed by the former City of Hereford Archaeological Unit in the 1980s and 1990s, usually in response to repair and restoration work; the archaeological surveys were supplemented by historical research into primary, usually manuscript, documentary sources. Eight of the buildings reported on are of medieval date, commencing with the Great Hall of the Bishop of Hereford, dated to *c.*1190. A 13th-century building is shown to have been moved and renovated in the later Middle Ages; one other building pre-dating the Black Death is shown to be of first-floor hall type. This and other buildings examined were halls belonging to canons serving the Cathedral. Other hall-houses of *c.*1400 in the city centre and in the southern suburb are also examined. A further sixteen buildings from the period *c.*1500–*c.*1700 cover a greater social range than the earlier buildings. The office-holding classes are well-represented by mansions with ceiled grand rooms on two levels, but the poorer classes are present too, with a city-centre pewterer's house and two extremely simple suburban dwellings. The book concludes with a brief study of the earliest surviving brick town-house of the late 1690s.

Resumé

Ce volume examine en détail vingt-quatre bâtiments historiques de la ville épiscopale de Hereford. Tous ces bâtiments sauf un furent inspectés parl'ancienne unité d'archéologie de la cité de Hereford dans les années 1980 et 1990, généralement en réponse à des travaux de réparation ou de restauration; des recherches historiques parmi les sources documentaires primaires, normalement des manuscrits' vinrent compléter les études archéologiques. Huit des bâtiments qui font l'objet d'un rapport datent du Moyen Age, à commencer par le Grand Hall de l'évêque de Hereford datant d'environ 1190. Il est apparu qu'un bâtiment du 13ème siècle avait été déplacé et rénové dans la seconde moitié du Moyen Age; un autre bâtiment datant

d'avant la Peste Noire s'est révélé être de type grande salle de premier étage.Celui-ci, ainsi que d'autres bâtiments inspectés, appartenaient aux chanoines qui officiaient à la cathédrale. D'autres maisons à grande salle du centre ville et des faubourgs sud, datant d'environ 1400, ont aussi été examinées. Seize bâtiments supplémentaires de la période d'environ 1500 à environ1700. couvrent une échelle sociale plus étendue que les bâtiments plus anciens. Les classes détenant une charge sont bien représentées par des hôtels particuliers avec de grandioses salles plafonnées sur deux niveaux, mais les classes plus pauvres sont également représentées par la maison de centre ville d'un potierd'étain et deux habitations extra-muros extrèmement simples. Ce livre se termine par une brève étude de la plus ancienne maison de briques encore debout, elle date de la fin des années 1690.

Traduction: Annie Pritchard

Zusammenfassung

In diesem Band werden die detaillierten Untersuchungen von 24 Stadthäusern aus der Domstadt Hereford vorgelegt. Mit einer Ausnahme wurden die Bauaufnahmen der Gebäude vom ehemaligen City ofHerefordArchaeological Unit in den 1980iger und -90iger Jahren, normalerweise im Zuge von Reparatur- und Restaurierungsmaßnahmen, durchgeführt; zusätzlich zu den archäologischen Aufnahmen wurden auch primäre historische Quellen, meist in Form vonHandschriften, ausgewertet. Von den hier zu behandelnden Gebäuden sind acht mittelalterlicher Zeitstellung, angefangen mit der Great Hall der Bischöfe von Hereford aus der Zeit um 1190. Ein Gebäude aus dem 13. Jahrhundert wurde nachgewiesenermaßen im Spätmittelalter verlagert und renoviert; ein anderes Gebäude, das in die Zeit vor dem Schwarzen Tod datiert, konnte als Saalgeschosshaus identifiziert werden. Sowohl bei diesem Haus als auch weiteren untersuchten Gebäuden handelt es sich um Hallenhäuser, die verschiedenen Domdekanen gehörten. Des Weiteren wurden auch andere Hallenhäuser der Zeit um 1400aus dem Stadtzentrum und der südlichen Vorstadt untersucht. Sechzehn weitere Häuser aus dem Zeitraum von ca. 1500 bis 1700 decken eine größere soziale Bandbreite als die älteren Gebäude ab. Die Klasse der Amtsträger ist durch herrschaftliche Wohnhäuser mit großzügigen, getäfelten Räumen auf zwei Etagen gut vertreten, aber auch die ärmeren Schichten sind präsent, u. a. mit dem Haus eines Zinngießers im Stadtzentrum und zwei außerordentlich einfachen Behausungen in der Vorstadt. Der Band endet mit einer kurzen Studie zu den ältesten,

noch erhaltenen städtischen Backsteinhäusern aus den späten 1690iger Jahren.

Übersetzung: Jörn Schuster
(ARCHÆOLOGICALsmallFINDS)

Preface

Ron Shoesmith and Nigel Baker

The City of Hereford Archaeology Committee was formed in 1974 as a result of a report detailing the archaeological implications of future development in the city (Shoesmith 1974). The Committee then organised an excavation and survey body: the City of Hereford Archaeological Unit (CHAU). For several years the unit concentrated on excavations, with major reports published in the 1980s (Shoesmith 1980, 1982, 1985). Interest in standing buildings, mainly ruins such as Goodrich Castle, led to the production of stone-by-stone elevation drawings used to analyse the buildings and to record details of their construction and subsequent development (Shoesmith 2014).

This led to further building surveys such as those of the ruined churches at Urishay and Llanwarne (Shoesmith 1987, 1981). The importance of producing detailed reports, particularly of listed buildings in advance of development, was properly appreciated by the early 1980s, and CHAU had the necessary expertise. One of the earliest of its building surveys was that of the Essex Arms, then a dilapidated building on the east side of Widemarsh Street. After a full survey had taken place, this timber-framed building was carefully taken down and re-erected as a café at Queenswood Country Park, some six miles north of Hereford. This was followed by a detailed survey of the rear buildings at 26 and 27 High Town, then the International Stores and Wakefield Knights. The main three-storey timber-framed building of no. 26 was shown to be reasonably complete above the ground floor and was an excellent example of a rich merchant's house of the 16th century. The two buildings now form a branch of W.H. Smith. Many other surveys followed, including two of particular interest in 1987. These were the Cathedral Barn, which was shown to be of probable 13th-century origin (Shoesmith 2011), and the rear part of No. 41a Bridge Street, a timber-framed building of the early 15th century. 1987 also saw the influential High Town Survey by the architects Rock Townsend.

By the early 1990s, CHAU had accumulated a substantial portfolio of historic building surveys, mostly arising from planning and listed-building casework. Each had been individually published as what would later be termed 'grey-literature' – technical reports of limited circulation – but there was clearly scope for a single volume looking at these buildings as a body to discern and describe some of the most important strands in the development of housing in the pre-modern city.

To this end, work began by CHAU on a volume of case-studies and synthesis, supported by Hereford City Council and English Heritage. By July 1996 a draft collection of case-studies had been completed, most of the individual building analyses being done by Richard K. Morriss, together with historical research commissioned from Dr Pat Hughes. The volume, of considerable length and detail, was known by the working title of 'The Secular Buildings of Hereford' (1996) and typescript copies were deposited for reference with a number of City Council departments, the County Sites & Monuments Record and with English Heritage. The lengthy tasks of synthesis and editing for publication remained, however, and the project stalled – and then, three years later, was overtaken by local-government reorganisation as Hereford City Council disappeared and was replaced by the unitary Herefordshire Council.

In the opening years of this century, the 'Secular Buildings' typescript was put to good use by Herefordshire Council's Conservation Officers but remained unpublished and little-known outside Hereford. In 2008 discussions were initiated with English Heritage (beginning with Tony Fleming, Inspector of Ancient Monuments; later Colum Giles, Head of Urban Research; latterly Rebecca Lane of Historic England), with a view to reviving, up-dating and publishing the volume. The principal authors of 'Secular Buildings' were re-recruited to the project, which commenced in 2010, supported by English Heritage, under the auspices of Herefordshire Council. Work began with fresh visits by the team to as many of the case-study buildings as possible; in the intervening period, one had been demolished, one had been moved out of the city, and another was currently a building site.

The revived, revised, volume, was to be, as expressed in the 2009 project design submitted to English Heritage, a 'definitive account of the development of houses and housing in the city from the earliest surviving example up to and including the advent of brick towards the end of the 17th century'. The new volume would also, it was hoped, reach a wider audience than local archaeologists and vernacular

architecture enthusiasts, not only in the sense of reaching an informed but non-specialist market but also in the sense of adding Hereford to the national corpus. It was clear to all that the historic buildings of Hereford are not just of significance to Hereford – they have a place in the bigger picture of the evolution of English towns, urban society, urban architecture and urban form: as a well-studied group, and on account of particular individual buildings, most notably the 12th-century great hall of the Bishop's Palace.

The revision of the *Secular Buildings* volume also offered an opportunity to broaden the study to include the landscape context of the buildings – its effect on them, and theirs on it. This arose from work on Hereford for English Heritage's (later Historic England's) *Urban Archaeological Strategy* programme (1992 – present), in particular the *Characterisation of the historic townscape of central Hereford* (Baker 2010a). The revision also presented an opportunity to secure some more dendrochronological dates to add to those reported in the original 'Secular Buildings' text. English Heritage therefore commissioned a further three sets of samples, for 29 Castle Street, Harley Court, and the Old House, and new colour photography was shot in early 2016. The revision and editorial process survived severe cuts in archaeological provision in the county in 2013–14 and the book, in its present form, was re-submitted to English Heritage in March 2015 and revised in 2016–17.

Scope

Originating in the casework of the former city archaeological unit, this volume could have been based solely on an historically random sample of surviving pre-18th-century buildings that happened to require extensive repairs in the 1980s and early 90s. However, it was appreciated by the original team that it would have been perverse to publish this group while excluding the outstanding 12th-century Bishop's Hall, next to the cathedral, Hereford's most famous historic building, even though it had not itself been the subject of a detailed investigation by the Hereford unit. The 'secular' remit of the original draft was also extended to include a number of Hereford's canonical houses, built for cathedral canons and grouped around the Close, and one instance of a communal hall built at a domestic scale, on a domestic plot (29 Castle Street). This was felt to be justified, not only on the pragmatic grounds that some of the earliest surviving buildings were canonical houses, but also because, despite ownership by an ecclesiastical body, the houses were mostly built for use by 'normal' households rather than canons or clerks living communally, and

might, in consequence, be expected to display variations on the usual infrastructure of medieval domestic life.

The original 'Secular Buildings' draft included some treatment of surviving almshouses, and of a purely commercial building, the Sack Warehouse on Wye Street, south of the river. These have not been included in any detail in the present volume, in order to provide a sharper focus on the setting of medieval and early modern domestic life. The present book also departs from the 1996 draft in that an extra building has been added – the Mansion House on Widemarsh Street. This is the earliest brick house known to survive in Hereford; it has received little prior attention but was felt to provide an ideal end-point for the study, enabling a discussion of the final demise of timber-framing in Hereford after an unchallenged reign of almost a millennium of (arguably) urban life.

The sample of 24 buildings is small by any standard. It probably represents less than five per cent of the total number of Hereford households in the later Middle Ages – though this is based on little more than guesswork, guided by a tax-paying population in 1377 of 1903 people, implying a rather larger total population and perhaps 500–600 households. The sample represents about 20%, one-fifth, of the approximately 121 listed buildings in the city with dated, pre-1700, fabric or 'early cores'.

All of the buildings in this volume are listed buildings, with two exceptions: 64–66 Widemarsh Street, demolished since it was surveyed; and the Essex Arms, Widemarsh Street, now moved to a country park. The total population of historic buildings in Hereford is unknown. Plate 3 represents the distribution of *known* buildings, period by period, but how much more early fabric lies concealed behind brick frontages and in attics is difficult to say. Many of the buildings of ostensibly of 18th- or 19th-century date are likely to conceal earlier structures.

1

Introduction

Nigel Baker

1.1 The City of Hereford (Figs 1.1, 1.2; Plate 1)

Hereford, the county town of Herefordshire, lies on the north bank of the River Wye, its walled historic core placed on a naturally defensible promontory between the Wye riverbank and the Widemarsh Brook, flowing from the north-west and joining the Wye about a mile to the east of the city centre. With a current population of 58,000, Hereford has substantially outgrown its medieval walls and the built-up area now covers around fifteen square kilometres, with vigorous new growth, particularly on the south bank. In contrast, renewal in the historic centre has been muted, as the city has struggled to find new purposes beyond its inherited role as a service-centre for the agricultural hinterland. Around the same time as the bronze statue of a Herefordshire bull took centre-stage on a plinth in High Town, the centuries-old livestock market moved from just outside the city wall, where it had been since 1854, to the distant suburb of Homer. The Buttermarket, the direct descendant of the High Town market founded in the 1070s, is now, after a long period of decline, looking to re-invent and regenerate itself in private ownership. Corn merchants' premises are now luxury flats. Out in the historic suburbs, from which the tanneries departed a generation or more ago, the scent of pasteurising apple juice rising from the Bulmer's cider factory on Whitecross Road is the only sign that the city still processes agricultural produce. A slight, but revealing, indicator of the economic precariousness of the city centre – and one which would have been recognised as such by the householders and city officers of centuries past – is offered by the empty frontages on the south side of High Town, only now (as this volume goes to press) on the verge of being rebuilt, eight years after a serious fire in October 2010.

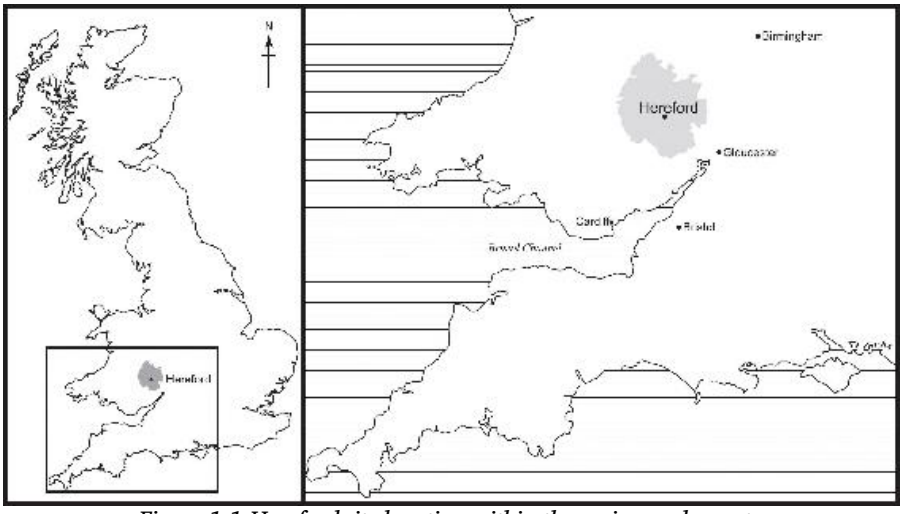


Figure 1.1 Hereford: its location within the region and county

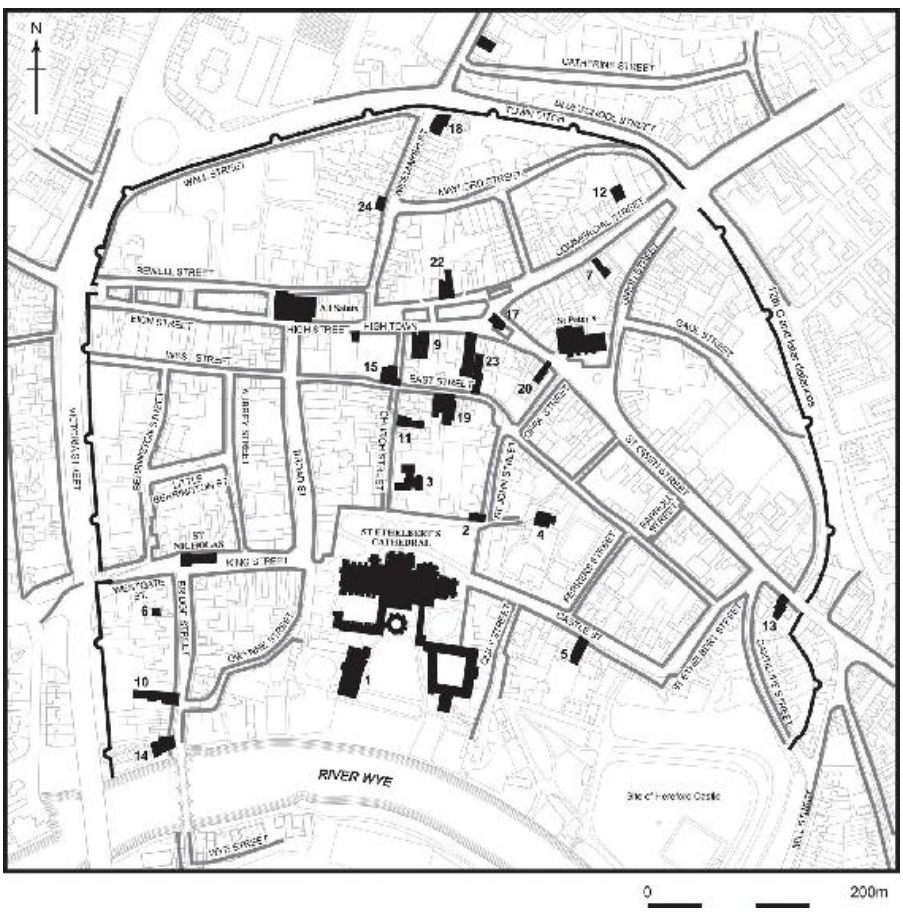


Figure 1.2 Simplified plan of the historic core showing modern street-names and building locations

But such economic hesitancy has, since the 19th century, had another, contrary, effect – the survival of historic urban fabric. Hereford has the best-preserved, most complete, medieval town-plan of virtually any county-town in England, measured in terms of new streets (only one) created within the old walls. And Hereford not only retains its Cathedral Close intact, unruptured by new roads, but the close is framed by a halo of large, ancient, open properties that derive from those of the medieval cathedral canons. These too are a rare and precious survival in a 21st-century city.

Finally, as this book relates, Hereford contains some of the oldest secular and domestic buildings in the country which pre-date the Black Death still in everyday use: the Bishop's Great Hall of the late 12th century, the Cathedral Barn, partly of the 13th century, and 20 Church Street, of the early 14th century. These are described in detail below, along with a further 21 historic buildings of the later medieval and early modern periods. Some of these, like the Old House in High Town, are well-known, almost iconic, Hereford buildings. Others are recent discoveries, more likely to be known only to their residents or staff, and a handful of enthusiasts and professionals.

1.2 Hereford 1100–1700: a brief economic profile (Figs 1.3, 1.4)

The economic history of medieval and early modern Hereford has only very recently been written (Whitehead 2016; Whitehead and Hurley 2016). What follows here are the briefest notes towards what seem to be some of the more obvious and general economic and social trends, or clues to what these might, be from fragmentary and disparate sources. It is unlikely that the historical or archaeological materials will ever be available to write a detailed economic history of the earlier, pre-Black Death, centuries. Sources are sketchy for the later part of the period too, but the dendrochronologically dated buildings in this book will make their own small contribution to the evolving picture.

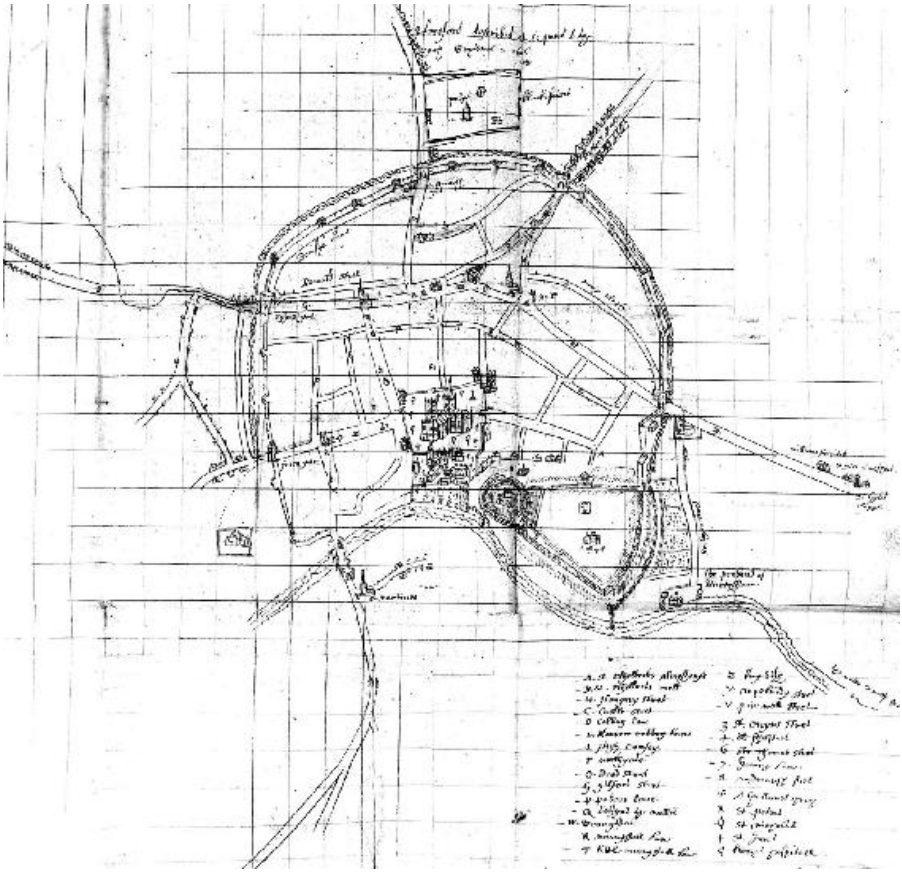


Figure 1.3 John Speed's 1606 manuscript plan of Hereford made in preparation for his county map and atlas of 1610 (Merton College Library D.3.30, no.7)

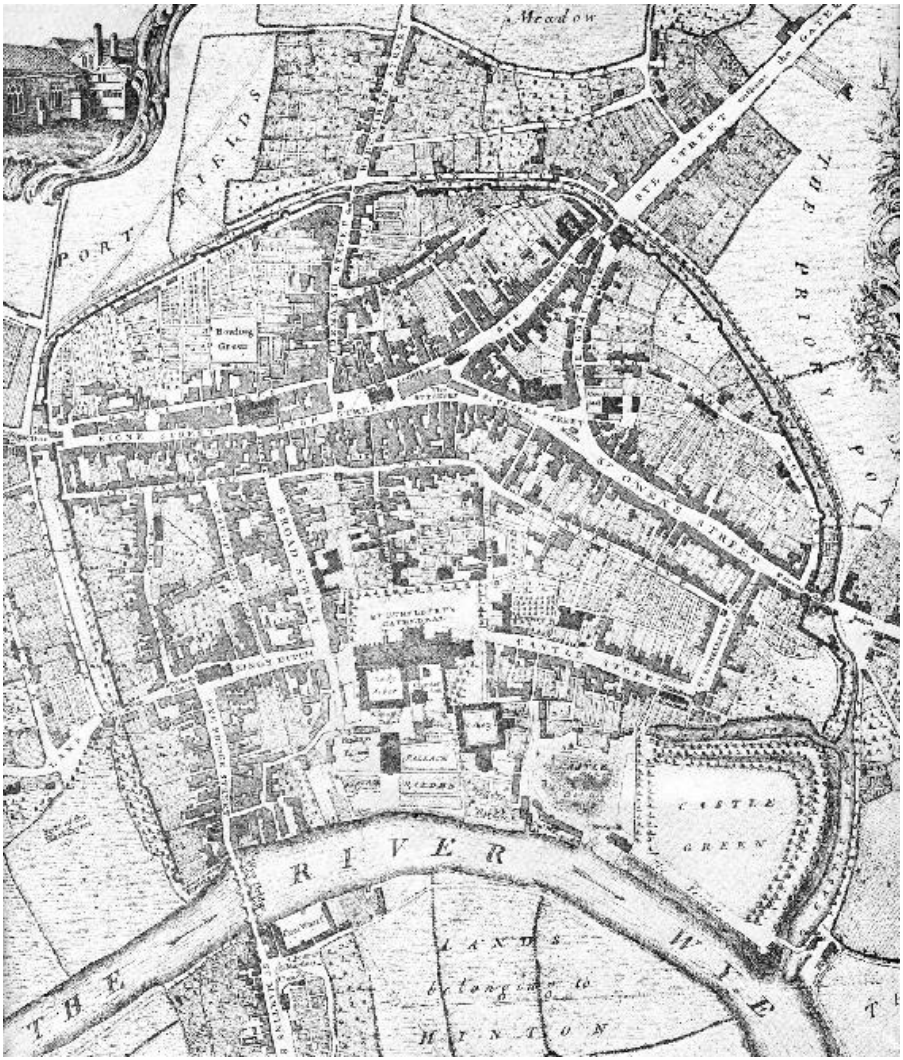


Figure 1.4 Isaac Taylor's map of Hereford, 1757

The period opens with the Domesday account of the city, as it was in 1086 and as it had been in 1066, with signs of both long-term growth and shorter-term contraction. The former is evident from the statement that there were households outside the defences; the latter from the account of the reduction of the bishop's rent roll, down from 98 dwellings to 60 and a much reduced income. However, the total render due annually from Hereford to the crown had risen, from £18 before the Conquest, up to £60 – for comparison, Shrewsbury rendered £40. The number of moneyers at work (seven) minting coinage in the post-Conquest city also suggests a buoyant level of economic activity, inviting comparisons with towns similarly provided

– Canterbury and Oxford – and contrasting with Shrewsbury's three moneyers. Other potential stimuli of economic growth can be identified: the creation of the new market place (later High Town) on the bishop's land outside the defences and the introduction of French burgesses. The Domesday reference to six smiths working in Hereford shows that iron goods were being manufactured, but gives no clue to the scale and ubiquity of iron-working right across the city that has been revealed by many years of archaeological excavation. The total population of the city at this time is extremely difficult to estimate, but a *minimum* post-Conquest figure of 1100 can be suggested, based on the number of recorded households (226 or more, including 103 of the king, 27 of Earl Harold, 60 of the bishop, and 20 of Roger de Lacy) and a likely multiplier of five persons per household (DB f.179a–181v; Lobel 1969, 2–4).

Despite the chaos of the civil war of the 1130s, the 12th century appears to have been dominated by economic growth. By the end of the century Hereford's suburbs had achieved more or less their maximum extent, not exceeded until the 19th century, with new religious houses founded at their outer limits. The now more-abundant documentary evidence shows a growing number of trades, with a flourishing cloth industry and a wealthy Jewish community located in the area north of High Town enclosed by new defences in the middle of the century (Shoesmith and Pikes 2016, 38). While not remotely measureable, the impact of building work at the cathedral on the urban economy is likely to have been substantial, with complete rebuilding of the cathedral church taking place between *c.*1107 and 1148 and substantial work at its east end in 1186–98 (Morris, in Aylmer and Tiller 2000). It is highly likely too that building work was taking place on all of the parish churches in the course of the 12th century, though evidence of this has been obscured by later rebuilding (at All Saints and St Peter's) or by the later demolition of the churches (St Nicholas', St Owen's, St Martin's).

The 13th century too should have been a century of almost uninterrupted economic growth, though it is not always easy to distinguish between new and newly documented structures, organisations, trades and processes. So, within the High Town market-place were the stalls or shops of the butchers (*bocheria*), fishmongers (*piscaria*), drapers (*draperia*), and cooks (*rangia cocorum*). Fines paid for encroachments onto the highway may relate to the creation of the market-infilling rows, such as Butchers' Row, at this time. Other trades are represented for the first time by recorded street-names, such as Corvesors' Row and Sadelwrites' Street, though they may have been

present, unrecorded, for many years (Lobel 1969, 6).

Closely packed buildings were probably a feature of central Hereford by *c.*1154 at the latest. The *Customs of Hereford* record that the common bell might be rung to summon householders in the event of, for example, 'a terrible fire burning any row of houses within the city' (Johnson 1882, 17–18). This source is problematic, in that it survives only in third-hand copies of a document compiled, ostensibly, from earlier sources in 1486, but it would scarcely be surprising for the period. In Shrewsbury, even in the 1080s heavy fines were levied on any burgess whose house burnt down; nevertheless, serious (parish-wide) town fires were recorded there in 1276, 1312 and 1393 (DB f.252; VCH Shropshire VI, part 1, 77, 106).

The building trades in Hereford are likely to have expanded substantially in the course of the century: while only one known fragment of a secular domestic building survives (the Cathedral Barn, see below) there is abundant evidence of massive institutional investment. New city defences of earthwork and timber were built in the 1140s or early 50s, and early in the following century they were rebuilt in stone (Shoesmith and Pikes 2016, 38; Shoesmith and Morriss 2002). Between 1230 and 1250 the castle was completely reconstructed and a new 'great tower' was built on the motte between 1245 and 1251 (Whitehead in Shoesmith 1980, 5). The cathedral underwent substantial rebuilding at its east end in the 1220s–30s, the north transept was remodelled between *c.*1245 and 1268, and towards the end of the century vaulting and windows in the nave and choir were replaced. Following the death of Bishop Thomas Cantilupe in 1282 and the translation of his bones into a new shrine, a thriving cult developed, bringing pilgrims and new income to the cathedral and the city (Morris, in Aylmer and Tiller 2000). Other ecclesiastical institutions – hospitals and two friaries – came to the city, mostly founded on extramural properties, and the parish churches of St Peter's and All Saints both underwent almost complete rebuilding around the end of the century.

In accounting for the growth of the city at this time, Margaret Lobel cited three particular factors: trade with a pacified Wales; the city's status as a free borough, acquired by successive charters that allowed it a degree of self-government and a guild merchant; and the presence of the cathedral and the royal castle (Lobel 1969, 7). While each of these factors would, without doubt, have been significant, it is impossible to determine their relative importance or offer any kind of quantification.

The city's prosperity was evidently maintained into the 14th

century, despite the obsolescence of the castle following the Edwardian conquest of Wales and its subsequent decline as a regular royal residence. At the cathedral, the cult of St Thomas Cantilupe flourished, to the benefit of the local victualling trades catering for pilgrims, and was accompanied by further significant building work, notably the addition of the tower over the crossing in 1307 (Morris, in Aylmer and Tiller 2000). Whether Hereford, as a market for agricultural produce, suffered as a consequence of the successive bad harvests and livestock diseases prevalent in the second and third decades of the 14th century, we do not know, but, from early in the century, 'subsistence migrants from the highlands of Wales', rather than merchants, became the most frequent travellers using the Wye Bridge (Whitehead 2016, 106).

It is, however, quite clear that the impact on the city of the Black Death in 1348–49 and a further epidemic in 1361, would have been severe. As ever, it is only ecclesiastical records that reveal any details, and these show the canons of St Peter's taking services to replace clergy that had died or resigned. In 1349, 120 deaths were recorded in St Peter's parish out of a population there of about 700 (Whitehead 2016, 106). Mortality statistics from elsewhere suggest that between 30 and 50 per cent of the population is likely to have been lost and a figure of 43 per cent has been suggested for Hereford (*ibid*). The effect on the city in the medium and long term is simply not known, though the experience of Gloucester may be instructive. There, the population level gradually grew again, though never, in the medieval period, back to what it had been before the Black Death. After the immediate calamity had passed, the city appears to have maintained its prosperity, with evidence of widespread rebuilding of private houses in the central streets and at the major ecclesiastical institutions, though there was simultaneously an abandonment of poorer tenements in the suburbs, some of which became depopulated and contracted to the point of disappearance (Holt 1990).

No comparable historical evidence is available yet for Hereford, though the rental of St Guthlac's Priory for the years 1436–1559 shows an institution struggling to survive and to recoup full economic rents from its properties. Rents stayed flat despite inflation, or 'decayed', and some disappeared as references to 'garden ground' and 'void ground' proliferated (Whitehead 2016, 114). Hints of a contraction in economic activity and perhaps settlement are also beginning to emerge from the archaeological record. Deposits dateable from the pottery they contained to the 'early 15th century or later' were, in 2002, rare in comparison with deposits dateable to 'the later

14th and early 15th century', and certainly extremely rare in comparison to deposits of 'the late 13th to mid-14th centuries'. This may have been due, in part, to the machining-off of later deposits in the first generation of open-area excavations in the early 1970s, but was nevertheless felt to represent a genuine drop in activity levels between *c.*1300 and *c.*1400 (Vince, in Thomas and Boucher 2002, 70). A more recent study of an excavation between Gaol Street and Bath Street noted that 'it is clear that there was a hiatus in occupation in many parts of Hereford in the middle to later 14th century, as a result of the fall in population resulting from climatic deterioration and the Black Death' (Crooks 2009, appendix 2).

Later 14th-century Hereford was dominated by the cloth trades – the sale and export of raw wool together with its processing locally by fullers, weavers and dyers, and manufacture into finished products by tailors, hosiers and cappers. These seem to have flourished, to the extent that the city could afford the £100 loan to the crown necessary for it to acquire a new charter in 1399 (Lobel 1969, 9). Building work at the cathedral may have been retarded by the mid-century epidemics but was later pursued vigorously. A new chapter house, started *c.*1340, was completed *c.*1370; the rebuilding of the cloister, planned in the 14th century, was finally under way in 1412, and the north porch, started *c.*1500, was finished by 1518 (Morris, in Aylmer and Tiller 2000).

Taxation records (the Lay Subsidy returns) for Hereford before and after the Black Death show the town's national ranking slipping slightly from 13th place in 1334 (local comparisons are Shrewsbury at 7th place and Gloucester at 16th) to 19th place in 1377 (when Shrewsbury was 17th, Worcester 25th), at which time it had a tax-paying population of 1903 (Hoskins 1972, appendix 1). It remained at 19th place in 1523–27 – at which time Shrewsbury had slipped to 26th place, with Gloucester little changed at 17th. Evidence cited below (p. 136) for tenements lying 'unbuilded' on Widemarsh Street outside the gate at the end of the 16th century may point to the partial depopulation of that suburb.

When John Leland visited in 1538 Hereford was well kept, its defences in good repair, though the castle had been let go. However, that year the Reformation came to Hereford as the dissolution of its monastic houses began, their lands snapped-up by the leading townsmen. Economic misfortune followed, the clothing industry going into a decline that was attributed at the time to Henry VIII's closure of two fulling mills and two corn mills – though similar developments were to be seen in many other English towns. The industry was still in

deep trouble in 1585, when Bishop Scorie left stock to two clothiers to enable them to put the poor to work. At the same time the weavers complained of their distressed condition by reason of the admission of strangers and unapprenticed youths – a protectionist attitude no doubt fostered by outside competition as cloth production shifted to the smaller towns and countryside. Nevertheless, Hereford's markets remained busy and the opening years of the 17th century saw the construction of a new three-storey timber-framed market hall in High Town, and several of the buildings covered in this volume.

The sieges and uncertainties suffered by Hereford in the course of the English Civil War appear to have left its economy seriously compromised. Its national ranking can again be judged from taxation records, and it is striking that Hereford does not appear amongst the top 42 provincial towns listed in the 1662 Hearth Tax returns. The probability is that the largest, wealthiest houses recorded for the Hearth Tax three years later with between five and eleven hearths each, rather than the usual one or two, were the old timber-framed mansions built well before the Civil War (Lobel 1969, 10). The 1665 Hearth Tax records 364 households, which has been used to calculate a population total within the walls of 1456, not including servants, lodgers and the poor (Whitehead and Hurley 2016, 192). In 1757, Isaac Taylor recorded population totals of 3878 within the walls and a further 1714 in the suburbs (5592 total); by the time of the 1801 census the total population had risen – but not much – to 6828 (*ibid*).

Despite the population growth evident between the mid-17th and mid-18th century, Hereford remained a remote county town, blighted, according to contemporaries, by poor transport links and the lack of a single substantial industry; the corollary of this was that it remained, until a relatively late date, a largely timber-framed town, still enclosed by its medieval walls.

1.3 The historic townscape of central Hereford (Plates 1–4)

Measured in terms of changes made to the street pattern since the early middle ages, Hereford has, for a city of its size, one of the best-preserved medieval town-plans anywhere in the country. Cantilupe Street, which cuts across formerly open ground at the angle made by St Owen Street and the eastern defences, was built at the end of the nineteenth century; every other street came into existence at a date before the earliest surviving records begin, and Speed's map of 1610 remains a perfectly serviceable guide to the modern city centre.

Change certainly took place above and beyond the usual plot-by-plot rebuilding. The late 18th century saw the modernisation of the city, most importantly the removal of all the medieval city gates. But whereas in neighbouring towns, such as Worcester and Shrewsbury, street commissions set about the widening of streets, the rounding-off of corners and the straightening of irregular frontages, in Hereford this process was relatively cautious, the only drastic street-widening being at the north end of Broad Street, the old Saxon Norgate.

The town plan is dominated by the horseshoe-like arc of the medieval defences. The top of the arc is a mid-12th-century extension of the Saxon defences to enclose the early Norman market place of High Town. This was based on a triangular junction of major through-routes, with roads heading west towards Wales and the upper Wye Valley, north-east towards Worcester, and south-east towards Gloucester and ultimately London. The streets forming the base of the High Town triangle are, from west to east, Eign Gate (formerly Eign Street), High Street, High Town, St Peter's Street and St Owen Street; all of them follow the outer edge of the pre-Conquest town ditch which in turn mirrors the bend in the River Wye 300 metres further south. West Street and East Street, running parallel to the Eign Gate/ St Owen Street line, follow the back of the Saxon rampart, as one of their former names, 'Behind-the-Walls Lane' implies.

South of (within) the Saxon defences, the street plan is quite distinctive, characterised by a series of approximately parallel north–south lanes interrupted by the streets of the only main north–south through-route – Broad Street/King Street/Bridge Street – and, centrally placed on the river bank, the Cathedral Close. The pattern of parallel lanes and streets has, since the 1970s, been interpreted as a surviving pre-Conquest street grid, based not just on their general morphology but on excavated evidence for the mid-Saxon date of two lanes on the western edge of the city: Berrington Street, and another, short-lived, previously unknown lane (Shoesmith 1982). While there is now little doubt that much of the street plan is indeed of pre-Conquest date, it seems less likely than was once thought that this was a consequence of a single act of town planning by one of the Saxon kings. This is suggested first by the slightly different arrangements of streets and plots found either side of Broad Street (described further below) and, second, by the division of pre-Conquest Hereford between two different principal jurisdictions or fees – the Bishop's and the King's. In the later medieval period these fees had ceased to be coherent blocks of territory and had become 'estates' in the sense of collections of properties (Rosser 1998), but much earlier they are

likely to have had discrete areas. The cathedral parish of St John may well represent the parochial 'ghost' of the bishop's territory, the parishes either side, the king's. In particular, the parish boundary between St John's and St Nicholas' to the west followed a substantial natural topographical feature, a small, steep-sided stream valley running south into the Wye, now largely infilled but recorded as 'the King's Ditch'. The manorial partitioning of the early town makes it less likely that Hereford was 'planned' with an overall street grid at one moment in time, more likely that it was developed by different agencies in a number of separate episodes.

Hereford thus exhibits in its plan, just as clearly as, for example, Nottingham, the extension after the Norman Conquest of a pre-existing Saxon fortified town or *burh*. Not only is the outline of the pre-Conquest town still perfectly evident in the town plan, but the difference between Saxon Hereford and Norman Hereford also persists to this day in the city economy. Broadly speaking, a distinction can be drawn between 'the cathedral city' and the 'commercial city': that is to say, between those parts of Hereford, mainly residential but with professional practices too, dominated by the Cathedral Close and related institutions (particularly the Cathedral School); and, on the other hand, those parts of Hereford dominated by the much busier retailing streets. This distinction, which can be quantified and mapped (Plate 2), broadly reflects the difference between Saxon Hereford and Norman Hereford.

The map reveals a concentration of modern retail and commercial functions radiating out from the High Town triangle but only achieving significant penetration south, through the former defences and into the Anglo-Saxon town, in two places: down the Broad Street/ King Street/Bridge Street through-route, and down Church Street. This too is part of Hereford's historic character: Broad Street appears to have been the market place of the pre-Conquest town, and there have been shops on Church Street from at least the early 14th century. But it is also the case that, away from the concentration of retailing around High Town, no two streets have exactly the same mix of functions.

Since these differentials in the pattern of land-use are of such long standing, they have influenced the form of the city centre buildings and the continuing process of their renewal. It is thus no surprise to see from a map of city-centre buildings distinguished by period (Plate 3) that the greatest concentration of buildings of 20th-century and later date correlates closely with retail and commercial functions, based on High Town. Away from this concentration, and particularly

within the Anglo-Saxon defences, the built-up area of the historic centre is mainly, at least to the eye, of 18th- and 19th-century date (Plate 3 is based largely on externally visible or recorded fabric). But again, on close examination, no two streets exhibit exactly the same mix of historical periods – and in this respect at least there is a greater degree of diversity in the High Town core, since while some of its street blocks have been comprehensively redeveloped in the last century, others retain buildings of several periods.

Closer inspection of the date-of-buildings map (Plate 3) reveals another correlation: between the date of buildings, their setting, and (by implication) their function. Much of the 20th-century fabric appears in large monolithic blocks; so too, to a lesser extent, does much of the Victorian city fabric. By contrast, the survival of earlier fabric occurs with greatest frequency amongst the smaller, narrower plots. The explanation is obvious: the later 19th and 20th centuries saw the construction of ever-larger retail premises, culminating in the mid-1980s with the Tesco supermarket within the north-west quarter of the defences, and the Maylord Orchard shopping centre in the north-east quarter. Earlier buildings tend to be smaller, and often stand in smaller, traditional building plots, descendants of the medieval burgage plots or, more correctly, burgages. Such plots are usually long and thin in their general proportions, reflecting the scarcity of space on the busiest frontages and the relatively low value of the often inaccessible land behind: the greater the demand for a particular street frontage, the narrower the plot. Thus there are variations within the High Town retail core area – some streets characterised by buildings built for national chain stores from the 1950s onwards, others by older buildings of mixed date standing within some of the narrowest plots (with scarce market-place frontage) to be found anywhere in the city.

In short, the geographical character of the historic city centre townscape is a complex mix of past and present land uses, 'townscape grain' and building date, no two streets exhibiting quite the same combination of these variables. It is worth briefly exploring this variability of historical character traits across the city as it provides an introductory contextualisation for the building case-studies explored later in this book. It may be done by means of the process of townscape characterisation, by which the variables are compared and mapped to produce 'townscape character areas', or neighbourhoods.

Plate 4 presents such an exercise, drawing distinctions between 25 identifiably distinct 'neighbourhoods', or *townscape character areas* (TCAs) covering the walled town and inner historic suburbs, broadly

divisible at a coarser resolution between 'the Cathedral City' and the 'Commercial City', as outlined above. The process has been undertaken more fully elsewhere (Baker 2010a) but may be briefly summarised.

The 'Cathedral City' is a term that may be applied to the eastern two-thirds of the former pre-Conquest fortified town or *burh*, and its constituent neighbourhoods share the common characteristics of being largely devoid of retail functions and dominated by Georgian and/or medieval architecture. The Cathedral Close (TCA or neighbourhood 'M') is, of course, dominated by the cathedral church and its associated buildings to the south: the Mappa Mundi Library built in the 1990s across the west side of the Lady Arbour; the cathedral cloister; and the late 12th-century Bishop's Palace (the first case-study building examined below, p. 22) and 15th-century Vicars' Choral buildings, both set in substantial gardens running down to the Wye. The green open space around the east and north sides of the cathedral represents the former cathedral cemetery, cleared and landscaped in the 19th century and re-landscaped *c.*2010. In many ways a classic English Cathedral Close – a relatively quiet, green open space with mature trees, surrounded by historic buildings – part of its distinctiveness arises from the character of the adjoining neighbourhoods of St John Street/Church Street (neighbourhood 'N') and Castle Street West ('O'). The former is a quiet, secluded street, not continuously built up and distinguished by substantial detached houses, of Georgian (or Georgianised) appearance, several with medieval origins, situated within extensive gardens. Three of the case-study buildings examined in this volume, the Cathedral Barn (Building 2), 20 Church Street (Building 3) and Harley Court (Building 4), lie in this neighbourhood. The latter two are former canonical residences, built for priests serving the medieval cathedral, while the first is a service building, the earliest element of which was probably part of such a residence. Castle Street West ('O') is a more complex neighbourhood based on an important street with continuously built-up frontages of Georgian appearance. But, again, medieval canonical residences are to be found here and their character – high-status, in large plots – has influenced the modern character of the area. One case-study building, 29 Castle Street, the former hall of the Vicars Choral (Building 5), lies in this area. The outer end of Castle Street (Castle Street East, neighbourhood 'P') is similar architecturally, differing from the western end of the street only in being predominantly residential, many of the buildings further west, closer to the cathedral, having been taken over by the Cathedral School. This

part of the street is also distinguished by the presence of the late medieval St Ethelbert's Hospital. It was also the site of the high medieval corn market, held outside the castle gate (Whitehead 2016, 104).

Beyond Castle Street, cutting through the eastern defences between St Owen Street and Mill Street, is Cantilupe Street (neighbourhood 'Q'), an insertion of the 1890s composed of detached houses of that date on its north-east side, their gardens confined at the rear by the former city wall, and public open space to its south-west at the end of the surviving section of castle moat, known as Castle Pool. To the south of Cantilupe Street and Castle Street lies the great wedge-shaped open space of Castle Green (neighbourhood 'R') representing the site of Hereford Castle. The motte at its west end was quarried away for gravel in the later 18th century; the former bailey was laid out as a public park in the mid-18th century and became the fashionable place for Herefordians to promenade. The grassed open space has substantial raised walks around its north and east sides, following the castle perimeter and probably encapsulating the remains of the curtain walls and towers that had still been standing a century before.

The 'Commercial City' is the term that has been employed to describe the remainder of the medieval intramural city in which commercial functions predominate, though, as already outlined, there is great diversity in the character of its constituent streets and neighbourhoods. Four largely commercial neighbourhoods occupy the western third of the former burh. The most singular, the most individually distinctive, is Broad Street (neighbourhood 'G'). This appears to have been the principal market street of pre-Conquest Hereford and is, as the name suggests, substantially wider than the others in this part of the city. It is architecturally and functionally oddly diverse, a modern five-storey office building rubbing shoulders with Victorian institutions, notably the high-Victorian Gothic Library and Art Gallery, and small, two-storey timber-framed buildings – which pre-19th-century illustrations show were once predominant along the street. The plots here are mostly broad and reflect amalgamations that have taken place to accommodate the institutional and commercial architecture of the 19th and 20th centuries. The enormous Victorian frontage of the Green Dragon Hotel on the west side disguises a number of smaller, earlier, buildings subsumed into the hotel as it expanded.

To the south, King Street and Bridge Street (neighbourhood 'F') cover the remainder of the ancient through-route of the pre-Conquest town, passing from the river crossing to the north gate. This

neighbourhood is characterised by retail and professional functions (mainly estate agents, solicitors and so on) competing for space in three-storey Georgian buildings, or Georgianised, re-fronted buildings encapsulating earlier timber frames, mostly standing in narrow strip-type plots of traditional appearance. Three case-study buildings stand on the west side of Bridge Street: at the bottom, adjoining the Wye Bridge, is Wyebridge House (Building 14); a few doors up is the Black Lion public house (Building 10), and near the top is 41a (Building 6).

To the east of Broad Street is the smallest of the intramural neighbourhoods – Church Street (neighbourhood 'H'). A narrow, pedestrianised street, its buildings are mostly Georgian and brick-built, with intermittent survival of earlier timber frames; the buildings generally stand on small, narrow plots. Given its historic character, small scale, and its location running from High Town directly to the Cathedral, it is no surprise that the street is home to a concentration of up-market, small retail businesses. Church Street runs parallel to St John Street to the east and the common north–south property boundaries in-between the two, belonging to canonical plots. The origins of the street are not known, but it appears to be firmly part of the rectilinear landscape dependent upon the Cathedral Close. One case-study building is to be found here: 14 Church Street (Building 11), a well-preserved series of late 16th-century ranges extending back from the frontage. Two other case-study buildings lie immediately adjacent: while 20 Church Street (Building 3), set back in its old canonical plot, floats free from the street, The Grapes public house (Building 15) overlooks and very directly engages with it, though it is built on the back of one of the High Street plots (of neighbourhood 'D'). The impact of the 20th century on Church Street is minimal, confined to the grimly-monolithic former Post Office buildings, now used by the Cathedral School, on the south-west corner, and the more historically-sensitive rebuilding of the Lichfield Arms pub at no. 11 on the east side in the 1930s.

One further neighbourhood where commerce rules and residential functions are scarcely evident is the anomalous Berrington Street – Aubrey Street quarter (neighbourhood 'E'). This is currently a mixture of clubs, garages, secondhand furniture emporia and other retail outlets, punctuated by extensive surface car parks on land cleared of sub-standard dwellings in the 20th century and never rebuilt; there are also a number of solidly brick-built late Victorian commercial premises. The uses are, in general, characteristic of low land-values, a product of the relative isolation of this area from through-traffic routes, both vehicular and pedestrian. Nevertheless, it is of enormous

historic significance as the setting of the Victoria Street and Berrington Street excavations of the late 1960s and 70s, which demonstrated that the area was first built up and its street system created in the middle Saxon period (see p. 12, below). The survival of historic fabric here is, however, limited (there are no case-study buildings in this area), and symptomatic of protracted decline in the post-medieval period. The 17th-century Aubrey's Almshouse on Berrington Street is the only externally-evident timber-framed building in the neighbourhood.

To the north and east, beyond the pre-Conquest defences, lie four adjacent neighbourhoods comprising High Town ('D') and the major streets converging on it: Eign Gate/Bewell Street to the west ('A'); Commercial Street/Union Street to the north-east ('J'), and St Owen Street to the southeast ('L'). Although all are retail-dominated and collectively account for a large part of Hereford's 'retail offer', each is quite distinct, spatially, architecturally, functionally and historically. Eign Gate, formerly Eign Street, is the principal approach road from the west but is nevertheless a relatively narrow, now-pedestrianised, street. The larger, longer plots on its south side attracted more 20th-century investment than the much smaller plots on the north, including the former F W Woolworth store (now re-occupied) on one of several amalgamated plots occupied by national chains. Most premises are, however, smaller, three-storey 19th-century buildings, with fewer 18th-century buildings, and one very recently discovered encased timber-framed building at 31. The even-smaller premises on the north side are constrained at the rear by the presence of Bewell Street, running parallel to Eign Gate. Bewell Street has the character of a rear service lane – and this may well have been its origin, possibly planned as such in the late pre-Conquest period. Excavations on the north side of Bewell Street have consistently produced evidence of industrial production, but no sign of permanent housing before the 16th century. It was, however, intensively developed with court housing behind the frontage by the mid-19th century; this was gradually cleared as the town got to grips with its sub-standard housing and major public health issues following the passing in 1854 of the Hereford Improvement Act. The north side of Bewell Street is now largely occupied by the Tesco supermarket and its car park (neighbourhood 'B'). The shops towards the west end of the Eign Gate frontage show clear signs of timber-framing within, but have not been investigated.

St Owen Street offers a complete contrast. Much wider than Eign Gate, and given added dignity by the 19th-century Shirehall and the

Edwardian terracotta Town Hall at its western end, it was referred to by Nikolaus Pevsner as 'the most consistent Georgian brick street in Hereford' (Brooks and Pevsner 2012, 342). Here, the Georgian brick town-houses, while again of three storeys (or two with attics), were mainly substantial residences built for the professional classes and county families and not, as on Eign Gate, for artisans and shop-keepers. As a result, uses on the street are mixed, retailing competing with (and reflecting) professional uses, particularly doctors' surgeries. But here too there are occasional encased or visible timber frames: 50a, at the outer end of the street, forms one of the case-studies examined below (p. 98). The inner (western) end of the street terminates at the small triangular market place of St Peter's Square, standing in front of St Peter's church. The Town Hall (1903), the Shire Hall and the War Memorial give this end of the street an unmistakably municipal feeling, arguably a consequence of being on the edge of Hereford's 'judicial quarter'. The presence of the modern Bath Street police station, the Shire Hall courts, the Probation Service building and the recent Magistrates' Court on Bath Street, clustered together in the north-eastern quarter of the city (Gaol Street: neighbourhood 'K'), arises in the first instance from the location of a gaol in one of the towers of the medieval Bye Street Gate which stood at the end of Commercial Street and Union Street. The gate was demolished in 1799, but by then the gaol had expanded; it continued, and went on to spawn a series of related successor-functions.

The character of Commercial Street (neighbourhood 'J') is different again. Commercial Street is a funnel-shaped street space, widening towards High Town and narrowing towards the former Bye Street Gate. The buildings, outwardly 18th century through to 20th century, similarly diminish in height from the centre to the periphery, from three storeys at the High Town end to two at the Bye Street Gate end. Functionally, it is closely akin to the High Town retail core in supporting a number of familiar national chain multiples (MacDonald's, Waterstones, Greggs). Union Street, for much of its length, acts as a service lane at the back of large premises facing Commercial Street; its east side, however, is occupied by much smaller plots, buildings (mainly late 18th- or early 19th-century) and businesses. There are two case-study buildings in this street: one on the north-west side of Commercial Street behind a rebuilt frontage at 25 (Building 12); another, 50a, hidden behind the opposite frontage a short distance to the south (Building 7).

High Town itself (neighbourhood 'D') is an almost rectangular,

slightly wedge-shaped open space, closed-off abruptly at its west end at its junction with High Street and Eign Gate, the site of the medieval High Cross, changing more imperceptibly into Commercial Street and St Peter's Street at its east end. The frontage architecture is mainly 19th-century, interspersed with Georgian buildings and with significant groups of large 20th-century stores, particularly on the south side, which is dominated by the Marks & Spencer and Littlewoods buildings. The latter offers an unusual example of early conservation, with the timber-framed building formerly at 3 High Street embedded in the building of the 1960s at first-floor level (fig.4.3). The 20th-century contribution to the north-side frontage is more restrained, being restricted to the east end of High Town where shops on the corner of Gomond Street were rebuilt as part of the same scheme as the Maylord Orchard shopping centre behind (neighbourhood 'I') in the mid-1980s. The north side contains one case-study building, a timber-framed commercial range at the back of 10–11 High Town (Building 22), one of several early structures surviving in this area behind the Georgian frontage. The south side of High Town contains four case-study buildings: 26–27 (Building 9) on two plots amalgamated as an inn in the 17th century; 18 High Town (Building 23), an unusual rear range surviving behind a later frontage; 7 St Peter's Street (Building 20); and The Grapes pub (Building 15), really part of the streetscape of Church Street. The plots containing these buildings – where they have not been lost in gross amalgamations in the 1960s – are long, very narrow and serviced by secondary thoroughfares at the rear. They determine the extremely fine, dense, local townscape grain – the pattern of property boundaries that is one of the most distinctive plan-characteristics of this neighbourhood. One of the most significant of Hereford's medieval secular buildings is here too – the late 15th-century Booth Hall, lying alongside a passage at the rear of 16 High Town. This was a public rather than a domestic building and, while referred to later (p.170–172), is not treated as a separate case-study.

Entering High Town from the north is Widemarsh Street (neighbourhood 'C'), named after the Wide Marsh it crosses, starting 200 metres or so beyond the Widemarsh Gate. This street has a well-preserved historic townscape: mostly Georgian frontages, of principally three-storey buildings on well-defined traditional plots. The earliest known surviving brick house in Hereford, the Mansion House, built in the 1690s, stands on the west side; this is the final case-study building (24). The properties around it clearly contain a number of brick-encapsulated timber-frames of slightly earlier date.

Across the street, just within the former Widemarsh Gate, is the substantial early 17th-century, timber-framed, partly re-fronted mansion formerly known as the Farmers' Club (Building 18). There has been more 20th-century building towards the south (High Town) end of the street, notably the 1930 market buildings on the corner of Maylord Street and the extensive Primark shop of the 1990s on the west side. Nevertheless, a re-fronted timber-framed building, no.5, survives alongside the latter to the south, and partly overlies a substantial medieval undercroft (see p. 16).

Outside the gate, the extramural section of Widemarsh Street (neighbourhood 'V') is continuously built-up on both sides as far as Coningsby's Hospital, which marks the historical edge of the Wide Marsh, the floodplain of the Widemarsh Brook and the Tan Brook. Except for the multi-storey car-park on the west side and the corner of the new Retail Quarter behind it, on the site of the 1854 Cattle Market, the building cover as far out as Coningsby Street (*c.*150m) is traditional in character, being mostly 19th-century brick buildings in earlier but much altered and fairly illegible plots. This area contains one case-study building, now demolished: 64–66 Widemarsh Street (Building 21), an immediately post-Civil War building whose timbers seem to have been recovered from the wartime clearance of structures in front of the city gate. Much further out, well into the Wide Marsh itself, stood the Essex Arms (Building 16), a timber-framed building later moved to a country park. As a case-study building it is of singular significance in our sample as it is the humblest, and structurally one of the most basic, of the group, built for a carrier in *c.*1650. This part of Widemarsh Street, a flood-prone tanning district, was never salubrious and the survival of the Essex Arms on its east side may be attributed to the local lack of development pressure until the 1960s. But it was not alone, as the survival of the timber-framed and jettied Oxford Arms, just across the road, shows. Otherwise, local survival of historic buildings is extremely poor, and the area is dominated by late 20th-century single-storey commercial buildings. These, however, largely sit within well-defined sinuous plots of probable medieval origin, designed for occupation by trades in need of access to running water, which was provided by channels taken-off the natural watercourse. In short, even outer Widemarsh Street represents, in its own way, another well-preserved historic Hereford townscape.

Historic buildings and historic townscape

The townscape characterisation that is presented here in summary form to contextualise the case-study buildings is a description and

analysis of the historic features of the present-day city. A related form of analysis, most often known as *town-plan analysis*, may also be undertaken, which seeks instead to unravel the earliest development of the built-up area by paying particular attention to the most conservative, slow-to-change, elements in the townscape – the streets and plot boundaries. This approach, pioneered by the late M. R. G. Conzen and his successors, also offers a great deal to mainstream architecturally and archaeologically minded investigators by emphasising the 'grammar of townscape' (the inter-relationships between streets, series of plots, individual plots, and the buildings they contain) and offering models for the form and the evolution of typical urban plots (see Conzen 1969). Well beyond the scope of this volume, very brief analyses on these lines for Hereford have already appeared, the first by Thomas, Boucher and Whitehead in 2002, the second (more explicitly Conzen-like in method) by the present writer (Baker 2010a).

While attempting to identify components added to the evolving landscape at various dates as far back as AD 800, the raw material for these enquiries is, nevertheless, the physical detail of the city as it was recorded by surveyors at various dates from 1757 (Isaac Taylor's map) onwards. In such a context, the question of the continuing evolution of the townscape is an important one. It would be useful to know to what extent exactly the townscape mapped in the 1750s, or in detail in the 1850s and 80s, is representative of what was there in the 16th century, or earlier, not just as a way of assessing the reliability of assertions made about the form of the town in the medieval period, but as an indicator of the processes at work, re-shaping the early Modern town, that are of historical interest in their own right. Intensive study of the 24 buildings in this volume has shown how the townscape in which they are situated has evolved since they were built, and how complex the relationship is between what we see on an Ordnance Survey plan of the 1880s, and what was there in the 15th century; or, indeed, in the 12th.

1.4 Building materials

Hereford, was, as late as the 18th century, a timber-framed town. More precisely, it was a town of timber domestic and municipal buildings and, far fewer in number, stone ecclesiastical buildings; occasionally, both techniques were employed together, with a timber-framed first floor over a stone ground floor, as at the College of the Vicars' Choral of 1472.

Although the natural site of Hereford had many advantages for

early settlement, the availability of building stone close at hand was not one of them. Nor, unusually, did it have sources that were easily accessible to river transport. Most of the building stone identifiable in the city is Old Red Sandstone, probably from Capler quarry near How Caple, 9 miles (14 km) to the south-east. It was used in the cathedral, All Saints' and St Peter's, and church records state that it was brought overland, river barges only being used when the river level was at its highest. The Capler quarry is said to have very variable beds, some 'hard clean sandstone', others 'lightly cemented and full of clay'; the best was sought-out by masons of the Herefordshire School of Sculpture in the 12th century. The sources of stone used for the city walls in the 13th and 14th centuries are less certain, with some use of Old Red Sandstone but possibly also a mixture of stone from glacial deposits in the Wye and Lugg Valleys (Olver 2012, 8–10; Kendrick 1967, 8–10).

Brick arrived late in Hereford, the first documentary reference to a brick house being in the 1630s. The earliest brick house to survive, the Mansion House (Building 24) on Widemarsh Street, was built shortly before 1697. Nash's Warehouse, off St Martin's Street on the south bank, may be of similar date (Whitehead and Hurley 2016, 202–3). In the archaeological record, brick appears rather earlier, in the 16th century, and may first have been used for chimneys and fireplaces, as it was in Shrewsbury. The city council was condemning the use of timber for chimneys, and insisting on stone or brick, in the mid-17th century (Whitehead and Hurley 2016, 200). Ceramic ridge-tiles first appear in Hereford in archaeological collections in the mid-13th century, more commonly after the late 13th century; flat ceramic roof tiles do not appear until the 16th (Vince 1985). The absence of flat tiles before that date may suggest (in the absence of stone tiles in contemporary archaeological contexts) that organic roofing materials were commonly used, either thatch (cereal straw) or wooden shingles. Stone roof tiles eventually appear as waste material in 16th-century and later deposits but it is difficult to estimate how long it had been commonly in use prior to that.

1.5 The origins of city housing: the excavated evidence *c*.800–*c*.1300

While Hereford can lay claim to being one of the more intensively excavated medieval towns or cities of western England and the Marches, it is easier to comment on the developing technology of secular buildings than it is on the evolution of their design or their

floor plans. This is because most excavations since the 1970s have been conducted on a relatively small scale, usually behind street frontages, so complete building plans are very rare. However, large-scale, open-area excavations in the western quarter of the city in the 1970s revealed complete examples of the very earliest generation of secular buildings.

Substantial remains of domestic buildings of the middle Saxon period were found on two excavation sites, Berrington Street and Victoria Street, just within the western defences (Shoesmith 1982, 24–55). The earliest phase of buildings was thought to date to the late 8th or early 9th century. They were all of post-hole construction: built with earth-fast vertical timbers that derived their principal lateral support from being dug into the ground. The dimensions of the post-holes varied greatly, sometimes within an individual building, suggesting that various construction techniques were used, and that buildings had been subject to repairs and replacements. Some post-holes occurred in pairs, 2 m apart; some post-holes were found to have contained vertical planks (0.2 m by 0.05 m), often associated with stake-holes, sometimes occurring in pairs set at right-angles to each other. Burnt material found in the overlying layers suggests that daub was used as infill between the posts. The buildings were floored with beaten earth and hearths survived in some. There was no evidence for their roofing material, though it was probably thatch. Where their dimensions could be established, the buildings were between 9 m and 12 m long and 4.5 m to 7.5 m broad. In some of the buildings there was evidence of a simple cross-passage, defined by lines of posts, thus creating a simple two-cell plan; in one instance the central space was *c.*2.8 m wide, suggesting perhaps a narrow room rather than a passage. The buildings all lay gable-on to one or other of two streets, in square plots (roughly 17 m by 18 m), well separated from their neighbours.

The second-generation buildings all lay on the Berrington Street excavation site and were built at various dates between the 10th and early 12th centuries. They represent a technological advance in that their walls were built off horizontal timber sleeper-beams or sills, represented in the excavation by earth-cut slots; the excavator considered that they could potentially have risen to two storeys. Their floors were all of clay and several had hearths. No complete plans could be established for this later group, but they, like their predecessors, appear to have lain gable-on to Berrington Street. With the passage of time, metalled courtyards and ancillary buildings were developed to their rear. There was also some evidence for their

function: weaving was taking place in their earliest phase; charred grain in one that had burnt down suggested that wheat had been stored in it; smithing slag was used as yard metalling and floor make-up in the final phase of another (Shoesmith 1982, 96–9).

Earth-fast post buildings have been seen elsewhere in the city, and the technology was still in use well after the Norman Conquest. At the Castle House Hotel site, at the eastern end of Castle Street, excavations in 1999 found the remains of burnt buildings built in this tradition in the 10th or 11th century; the site also produced loomweights and the buildings could have been either domestic or industrial. The investigations were, however, too small in scale to determine any plan forms (Crooks and Boucher 1999). Excavations at 16–18 Harrison Street (just outside the later city wall, off St Owen Street), also in 1999, found one wall of a building built in the 12th or 13th century, going out of use in the 14th, which used a variant foundation system in which a sill beam resting in a slot was interrupted by earth-fast vertical posts at regular intervals. The building lay set back from a minor lane but, again, whether it had been a domestic building or had an ancillary or craft function was not determined (Sherlock 1999).

Earth-fast foundation systems were not limited to the houses of ordinary townspeople. Recent excavations in the Cathedral Close, a few metres to the south of the cathedral's east end, revealed a foundation trench or slot, and posts, of one wall of a massive timber building. The slot was 0.4–0.5 m wide, with posts set along the outer edge; one post was 1 m in diameter and founded 1.9 m deep. The foundation was dated to the period *c.*850–950 and was thought to belong either to a pre-Conquest predecessor of the cathedral, or to an episcopal or royal hall (Boucher, Craddock-Bennett and Daly 2015, 31–6).

The final transition from earth-fast foundation systems in which the superstructure derived some measure of support from being cut into the ground, to some form of entirely self-supporting, jointed and braced timber-framing, built off solid, damp-proof footing-walls, had probably been completed in Hereford by the end of the 13th century. The process can be illustrated from two sites excavated on side-streets.

Excavation of a site between Bath Street and Gaol Street, just within the northern defences, found a rectilinear building, identifiable as a smithy, built sometime between the late 11th and late 12th century. It was square or rectangular, built with substantial post-holes and a beam slot. Several of the post positions had been recut, suggesting the repair and repositioning of timbers during the lifetime

of the building. A number of groups of stakeholes probably held the upright members of screens or partitions, some of them probably screening the hearth. The building was demolished for the construction of the town defences and then, in the mid- to late 13th century, a new building was built, of similar size to its predecessor and more or less on the same site, but adjusted to fit around the new rampart. This building was again square or rectangular but its walls were constructed with continuous low stone foundation walls of roughly squared, clay-bonded stones surviving two or three courses high. The new building was surrounded by pitting containing tannery waste and was clearly in one of the most insalubrious districts that Hereford had to offer. The presence of an instrument tuning-peg and butchered bear bones might be thought to indicate that it was a tavern (Crooks 2009); conceivably, given its location on Grope Lane, as Gaol Street was then known, it was a brothel.

On the north side of town, excavations at the western end of Bewell Street in the 1980s, preceding the construction of the Tesco supermarket, found the stone foundation walls of a timber-framed building built in the late 13th or early 14th century. It was originally a two-bay building, with a clay floor in the western bay and a pebble floor in the eastern bay; it was later extended to the east and then to the south. It had been built set back from the street frontage behind a small courtyard, separated from the street by a wall. There was insufficient evidence to determine whether it was purely domestic or had an industrial function (Thomas, in Thomas and Boucher 2002, 27–31).

Both buildings lay in marginal locations on secondary streets – Gaol Street (Grope Lane) just within the northern rampart, Bewell Street, a service lane behind Eign Street, just within the western defences. Both buildings also lay in areas particularly associated with low land-value industry: metalworking, followed at Gaol Street by tanning. It is therefore highly probable that the busiest, highest-value trading frontages on the central through-streets and around High Town had been rebuilt with fully triangulated timber framing, capable of supporting a second storey, many years before. It is, though, precisely from such locations that no above-ground archaeological evidence is known to have survived later rebuilding. A small but informative additional body of evidence is, however, available in the form of surviving or recorded medieval basements.

1.6 Cellars and undercrofts (Figs 1.5–1.12)

When this volume was commissioned, it was hoped to be able to

undertake a brief, targeted programme of visits to city-centre cellars known to contain medieval fabric, with the aim of better contextualising the case-study buildings and, just possibly, gaining insights into the design of a generation of town houses pre-dating those that survive to this day. These aims were, in the end, only partly achieved, principally because access to many of the known historic cellars was denied (usually by out-of-town companies), or was impossible because of shop fittings. Based on published information, extant records, and those visits that could be made, a brief introduction to the subject is all that is currently possible. The experience of other comparable towns suggests that, were a comprehensive or wide-ranging survey of cellarage in Hereford to take place, many new historic structures would be discovered and added to the record.

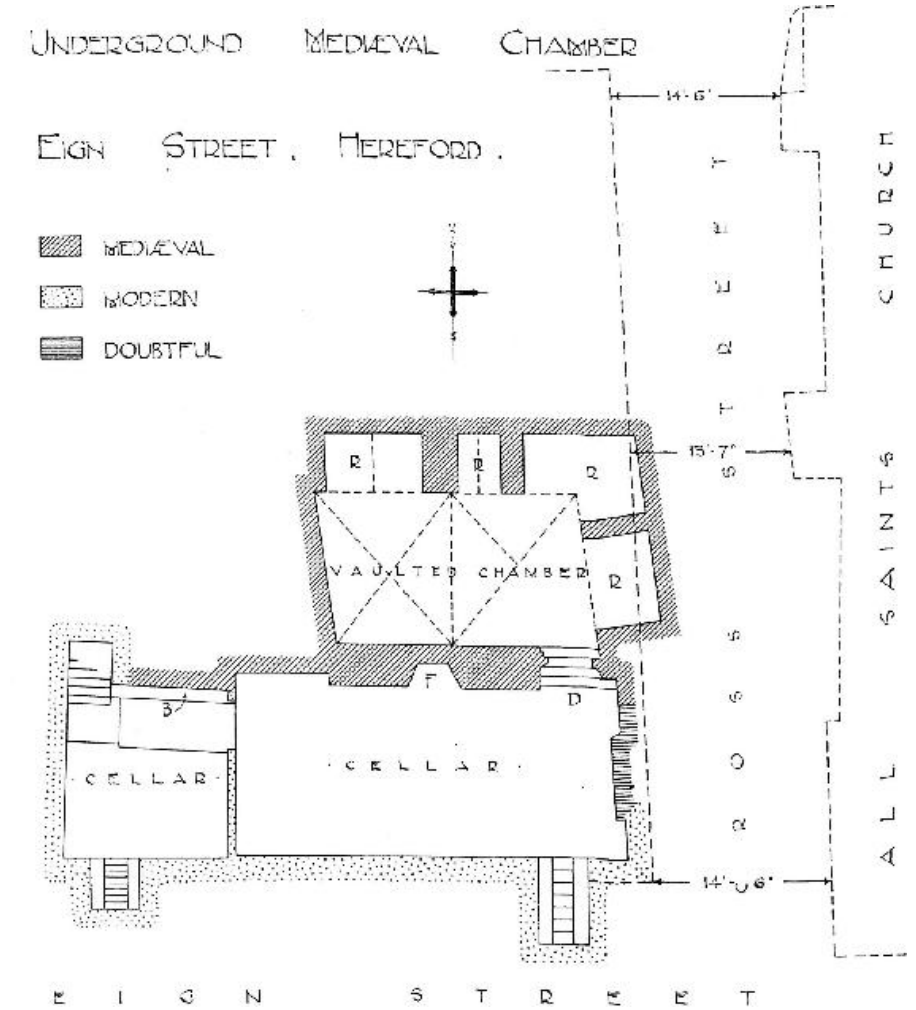


Figure 1.5 Edward Bettington's 1932 plan of undercrofts below the former Greyhound Inn (now a card shop) on Eign Gate

Figure 1.6 The rear, vaulted chamber of the Eign Gate undercroft, showing the entrance doorway and a recess (?for barrels) in the east wall

At this point the term 'undercroft' requires definition. The term is used here for a cellar of medieval date, either completely or partly subterranean, sometimes with a stone-vaulted roof, designed for active commercial or domestic use, often evidenced by decoration or lighting. They are frequently found to have external access that is separate from the building above, an arrangement consistent with the abundant historical evidence that they were often rented out, frequently as taverns.

The earliest cellar known in Hereford was discovered by excavation, on the Broad Street frontage of the 1993 Mappa Mundi site immediately south-west of the cathedral. It was of late pre-Conquest date, built with mortared stone rubble walls, and was arranged at right-angles to the metalled surface of Broad Street; a stone wall that continued south from it along the frontage may have belonged to a further range of buildings or have been a boundary wall, possibly to the cathedral precinct (Stone and Appleton-Fox 1996, 30–5). The status of the cellar is uncertain, in that it may have belonged to a secular building, perhaps trading on the Broad Street frontage, but it could equally have been part of the pre-Conquest cathedral precinct. It is, however, highly unusual as an archaeological find, pre-Conquest cellars being widely known (from, for example, Oxford, Chester and Gloucester) in the region and further afield – but

universally timber-lined rather than of stone. It is not known whether the building above the stone cellar was itself stone, or timber-framed.

There do not appear to be any records from Hereford of cellarage with Romanesque features that might suggest a date before *c.*1200, on the lines of, for example, the barrel-vaulted cellar of the Fleece Hotel on Westgate Street in Gloucester, or the recorded and excavated undercrofts of 12th-century town-houses in Bristol or Worcester. The earliest recorded cellarage in Hereford appears, instead, to date from the 13th century. A sandstone cellar was found by excavation in 1967 towards the rear of the frontage buildings on the easternmost plot on St Peter's Street, at right-angles to the street. It was said to have been of ashlar construction with stone vaulting; at the south end was a blocked recess, either a lamp niche or cupboard. Although there was no architectural dating evidence, the archaeological finds supported a pre-14th-century date (Noble, Tonkin and Shoesmith 1967).

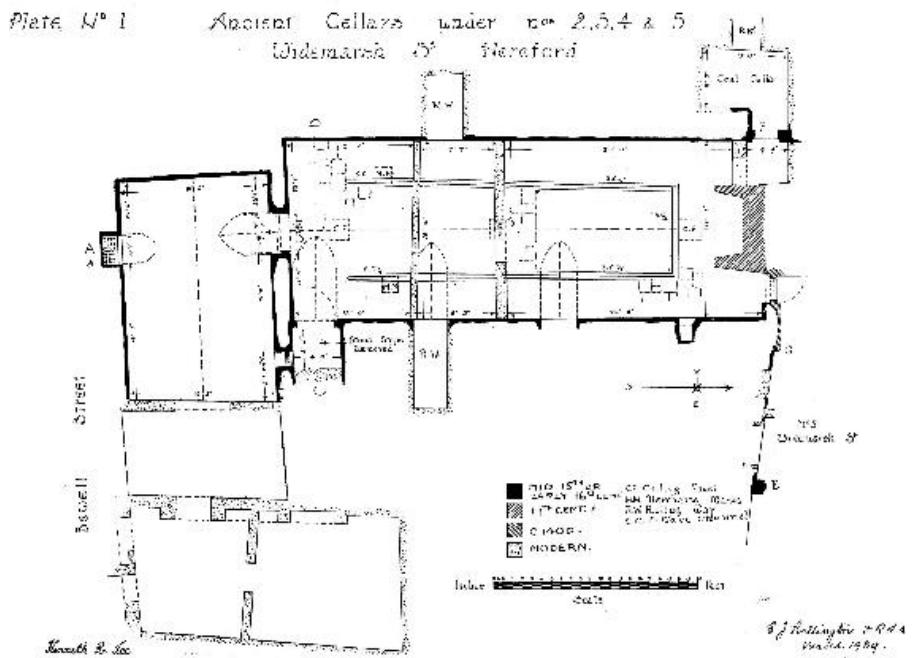


Figure 1.7 Edward Bettington's 1939 plan of 15th-century undercrofts set back behind the frontage of 2–5 Widemarsh Street

A stone-vaulted undercroft of this date survives on the north side of Eign Gate. Surveyed in the 1930s (Bettington 1932) and visited by archaeologists as late as *c.*2005, subsequent shop fittings prevented it being re-visited for this book. It lies under the mainly 18th-century

former Greyhound Hotel, separated by a narrow alleyway from All Saints' Church at the eastern end of the street. It consists of a two-bay, quadripartite-vaulted chamber, set back from, and parallel to, the main frontage. Around its east and north walls is a series of low recesses or niches with segmental arched heads, clearly contemporary with the remainder of the chamber and its vaulting (Fig. 1.6). Their low height suggests that the recesses were intended to accommodate barrels, or to serve some other, similar, storage function. A doorway in the south-east corner of the vaulted chamber (the door leaf opening inwards) has a simple two-centred arched head and gives access up a short flight of steps to the front cellar. This is a longer structure, the north and east walls of which are shown by Bettington as contemporary with the doorway and the vaulted chamber. In the centre of the north wall is a contemporary fireplace with 'shouldered corbels under the lintel'. The Royal Commission (1931, 138, no. 68) thought the cellars 'probably of the 13th century'.

How should the Eign Gate undercrofts be interpreted? The recesses around the walls of the vaulted rear chamber are highly suggestive of a wine cellar or tavern. The two-room plan of the cellarage is consistent with this too, the recurrent pattern being that of a front room for customers with a secure, cool back room for the storage and the drawing of the wine from the barrels, a process that was sometimes legally stipulated to be conducted in plain sight of the customer (Martin and Martin 2004, 126). The fireplace in the front room of the Eign Gate cellarage is also consistent with this explanation, although the recesses around the vaulted chamber are unusual and do not seem to be paralleled in the undercrofts of Winchelsea or Chester; they are paralleled in Norwich, but their use there is not understood (Martin and Martin 2004; Brown 1999; Smith and Carter 1983, 7). The Eign Gate undercrofts also show that a substantial building must have occupied this key, centrally placed site in the later 13th century. It would have had a frontage over 30 feet (9 m) in width. The thickness of the wall dividing the front and back chambers and the presence in it of a fireplace (with the implication of a stack above) also suggests that the building above would have been divided between a commercial frontage range, probably a row of shops, and a hall range immediately to the rear – an arrangement paralleled widely both in Hereford and elsewhere, and discussed later (p. 158).

Figure 1.8 Nos 2–5 Widemarsh Street, main entrance to the principal (north–south) undercroft

As already reported, the cellarage of the properties along the south side of High Town and St Peter's Street was not accessible to the authors of this book and recourse must be had to earlier records. The

best are of 17 St Peter's Street, formerly Nash House, a mainly 16th-century timber-framed building, heavily restored in the 1930s and burnt out, with its neighbours to the west, in the fire of 2010. The cellar is, however, largely medieval, a wedge-shaped space extending back from the street and reflecting the shape of the containing plot. Disregarding architectural fragments that seem to have been re-used to form a 16th-century chimney-stack base, its early features appear to have been of ashlar construction, a doorway at the west end of the front wall with steps up to the street situated alongside the opening of a large light-well. In the eastern party wall are three low, shallow, segmental-arched recesses, very similar to those of the Eign Gate undercroft (see above) and, similarly, likely to have been used for barrels. The RCHM surveyor noted another blocked segmental-arched opening in the back (south) wall and a narrow recess in the south-east corner with 'a rough stone slope', possibly another light-well. Not closely datable, this cellar or undercroft may also have been designed as a tavern, with separate public access direct from the street and recesses for barrels along the side (and perhaps back) wall (RCHM Investigators' notes, 1930, Herefordshire I, City of Hereford, monument 20; Watkins 1930). There is, however, no trace from the records of any lateral division suggestive of a front- and back-room arrangement; the simple plan, extending back from the street more or less at right-angles, is what is to be expected from the narrow plots along this frontage.

Elsewhere along this frontage, further medieval cellars are known but their details must await fresh inspection in the future. The High Town Survey of 1989 investigated all the buildings along the southern frontage, noting medieval cellarage (from west to east) under 22 and 27 High Town, 17 St Peter's Street (described above) and at 10 St Peter's Street. The best preserved was 22 High Town: 'It appears that these cellars at one time belonged to two separate buildings, but both were built at the same time. The front cellar was reached by steps leading down from the street into an open area. Between the front and rear parts is a dividing wall in stone, pierced by two four-centred doorways of the 15th century' (Rock Townsend 1989, 3.6). The Royal Commission also noted that the rear cellars of these properties are roofed with stone four-centred barrel-vaults (RCHM 1931, 134, monuments 24 and 25). The High Town Survey also noted that 'the main part of the cellar under 10 St Peter's Street is almost identical to the main cellar under 22 High Town, even down to the type and interval of the strengthening stones between the side walls and the springing of the vault' (Rock Townsend 1989, 3.6). Another vaulted

cellar or undercroft was recorded by the Royal Commission towards the western end of the street, under 3 High Street. This was said to have stone rubble walls, a longitudinal dividing wall pierced by a four-centred arched doorway, and a four-centred stone vault over the eastern room (RCHM 1931, surveyor's notes, monument 31).

In summary, of the five medieval cellars of which we have details along this frontage, all but one were arranged, as might be expected from the morphology of the plots above ground, with their component spaces at right-angles to the frontage, down the plot. What is perhaps more surprising is that three of the five appear to show the two-room configuration, discussed earlier, that was particularly characteristic of medieval taverns, and that the fourth (17 St Peter's Street), while a single room, was provided with niches in two walls that may well have accommodated barrels. The fifth, under 3 High Street, also had a two-room plan, one room vaulted, the other not, though arranged side-by-side rather than down the length of the plot. In short – all or most may have been designed specifically for use as taverns. All appear to have been built in the 15th century, probably the later 15th century, pointing to a generation of rebuilding on the south side of High Town that is now only represented above-ground by the Booth Hall, behind the commercial frontage.

Figure 1.9 Nos 2–5 Widemarsh Street, heraldic plaque (a merchant's mark?) inset in the

vault of the principal undercoft

Figure 1.10 Nos 2–5 Widemarsh Street, decorative plaque inset in the vault

Figure 1.11 Nos 2–5 Widemarsh Street, undercroft of the south cross-wing, looking west

Figure 1.12 Nos 2–5 Widemarsh Street, window in the south undercroft overlooking the entrance steps to the principal undercroft

In contrast to the narrow plans evident in High Town, the undercrofts that survive beneath the rear of 2–5 Widemarsh Street are indicative of an extremely wide mercantile plot in single ownership in the 15th century. The southern end of the cellarage under these properties was visited during the preparation of this volume, though the northern end was not accessible and many of the details of the principal vaulted space were concealed by a massive walk-in butcher's freezer. It was, however, surveyed by E J Bettington in the 1930s (Fig. 1.7; Bettington 1939).

At the Bewell Street (south) end of the property is a cellar or undercroft at right-angles to Widemarsh Street and set back from it, alongside and parallel to Bewell Street. It is roofed with a four-centred barrel vault and accessed either via a wide doorway in the east wall (facing Widemarsh Street – Bettington thought the cellar to have been shortened and this wall inserted) or via an original doorway with a two-centred arch, double-ogee mouldings and provision for a draw-bar, giving access to the main cellar lying at right-angles to the north. There is a lightwell from Bewell Street towards the western end of this cellar which, when Bettington surveyed it in the 1930s, still retained its iron grill at street level. Another original iron grill survives *in situ* in a small square window in the east wall: this gives a 'porter's-eye-view' of steps outside leading down to the front door of the main cellar, presumably from a courtyard behind whatever buildings then

stood on the frontage.

The front doorway of the main cellar is of extremely fine masonry, its complex double-ogee and hollow mouldings and two-centred arch completely unweathered; it is rebated for a door opening inwards. The cellar itself has a four-centred barrel vault running longitudinally. Set into the vault at intervals are five carved stone panels: three set into the ridge of the vault appear to be purely decorative, but two towards the western end set into the shoulders of the vault were thought by Bettington to be merchants' marks, though their iconography is long overdue for analysis (Figs 1.9 & 1.10). At the northern end of the main cellar is a massive stone fireplace with a flat lintel and simple chamfered jambs. Offset slightly west of the centre-line of the vault, Bettington thought this, probably correctly, to be an insertion, its substantial but crude masonry contrasting with the cathedral-quality craftsmanship evident in the remainder of the cellar. In the north-west corner Bettington noted the remains of another, smaller, doorway, possibly inserted, giving exterior access to the back of the plot; in the north-eastern corner was another doorway with a semi-circular head which he considered to be of 14th-century date, belonging to a contemporary wall, within 5 Widemarsh Street, up to which the main cellar masonry was butted when the complex was built *c.*1400 (Bettington 1939; RCHM 1931, monument 70).

The main cellar running north–south, and the smaller cellar at right-angles at its south end, appear – at the moment, without detailed re-survey – to be of one phase of construction and in single ownership throughout. The principal access was from within the plot – from a courtyard behind the frontage – but outside the footprint of the building. In that regard it resembles the undercrofts on the Greyhound Hotel site on Eign Gate (see above), in that it takes up the full width of a wide plot. As will be seen later, it appears to be an example of broad tenement planning, with the principal building, in this case fairly certainly a very substantial hall and cross-wing, laid across a plot whose frontage alone was densely sub-divided into commercial tenancies (see p. 158). The high-quality workmanship throughout and the decorative panels and possible merchants' marks set into the vault demonstrate that the main cellar at least was a space that was designed to be seen and to impress. It may well have been purely mercantile, for the storage and selling of whatever goods its 15th-century owners dealt in. The substantial fireplace suggests that it may have undergone a change of use that required heating. Bettington noted that the site may have been that of the Half Moon Inn in the 16th century, thus this cellarage too may have spent at least part of its

life as a tavern, even if that was not its designed purpose. The cellar at the south end was again part of a pub in the 20th century.

In conclusion, despite the very small number of Hereford undercrofts of which we have any knowledge, and the limited nature of that knowledge, some trends may be discerned and at least some of the aims set out in the introduction to this section, achieved. On the south side of High Town a 'lost generation' of buildings, earlier than all but one of the buildings now standing there, may be glimpsed in the cellarage – but only glimpsed: a detailed survey is sadly lacking. The undercrofts on the north side of Eign Gate, currently sealed beneath the fittings of a card shop, may well be the earliest truly secular building remains (excluding the Bishop's Palace) still in use in the city, although their form points to a commercial origin as a tavern rather than a purely domestic one; the plan-form of the cellarage just hints at the layout of the long-gone domestic arrangements at street level. The apparent predominance of the tavern in the cellarage of the medieval city is, perhaps, a surprise; to the examples given here can be added also one of the case-study buildings discussed later, 20 Church Street, which had a cellar called simply 'the tavern' in the 1560s (p. 35). The plan-forms generally evident in the medieval undercrofts do, however, add to our understanding of the case-study buildings, and this will be considered further in Chapter 4.

2

Medieval houses *c.* 1200–*c.* 1500

Pat Hughes and Richard Morriss

The first eight case-study buildings cover the period between the late 12th century and the end of the 15th. The Cathedral Close is over-represented in this minute sample of the buildings of the medieval town: the Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace is followed by the surviving structures of four canonical houses, one no longer *in situ*. The commercial city is represented by just two buildings. The final one (Pool Farm) strains at the definition of urban, belonging to the southernmost edge of medieval Hereford.

The presentation of individual buildings here is diverse in terms of the scope of the analysis and the availability of measured drawings. This is largely a reflection of the varying circumstances in which the original work was commissioned in the 1980s and 90s, and of the relative accessibility of the structures at the time.

(1) The Bishop's Palace (Figs 2.1 & 2.2; Plates 5 and 6)

Introduction

Encased within the 18th- and 19th-century brick facades of the Bishop's Palace are the fragmentary remains of what has been described as the earliest and probably the most important timber building in England (Smith and Jones 1960, 80). Given its celebrity and its undoubted historical significance, no apology is made for commencing the largely secular case-studies in this volume with a brief view of this building. And, like the medieval canonical hall-houses described below, there is nothing inherently 'ecclesiastical' in its design – it was built for a high-status household and in this instance all the closest analogues are in contemporary royal households.

Although the Bishop's Palace dates back to the 12th century and much of the original hall survives, the palace today is the product of centuries of change. The hall can be dated stylistically to the last quarter of the 12th century, and was most probably built in the early years of the episcopate of Bishop William de Vere, 'a courtly, sophisticated bishop' who came to Hereford from the court of Henry II, where he had had experience supervising royal building projects and gained a reputation as a generous, even lavish, host (Blair 1987, 61). Still used by the prelate, the palace is located in spacious and well-tended grounds between the cathedral cloisters to the north and the river to the south in what can be seen as the largest and grandest of the canonical plots that surround the cathedral church and its cemetery. Fossilised in the south cloister wall are the remains of the remarkable late 11th-century two-storey chapel built by Bishop Robert the Lotharingian, sadly demolished in the 18th century. The main entrance to the palace is through a courtyard on its west side, reached through a gatehouse from Broad Street.

Historical background

As early as the 13th century, Bishop Cantilupe is said to have expended *c.*£3000 on improvements during his episcopate (1275–82).[1] In the 18th century, Bishop Philip Bisse (1712–21) is credited with rebuilding much of the palace, dividing the two south bays and the north bay of the hall into living rooms and bedrooms. Bishop Bisse's epitaph claimed that he carried out 'the rebuilding of the palace practically from its foundations', encasing it in brick, though this is regarded as an exaggeration (Blair 1987, 64). The 19th-century Hereford writer J. Jones believed that Bisse accelerated the ruin of the Chapter House by removing two of its windows and 'applied them to the repair of the Episcopal palace' (Jones 1858, 78) and there was general agreement that stone from the chapter house was used for repair of the palace over many decades.[2]

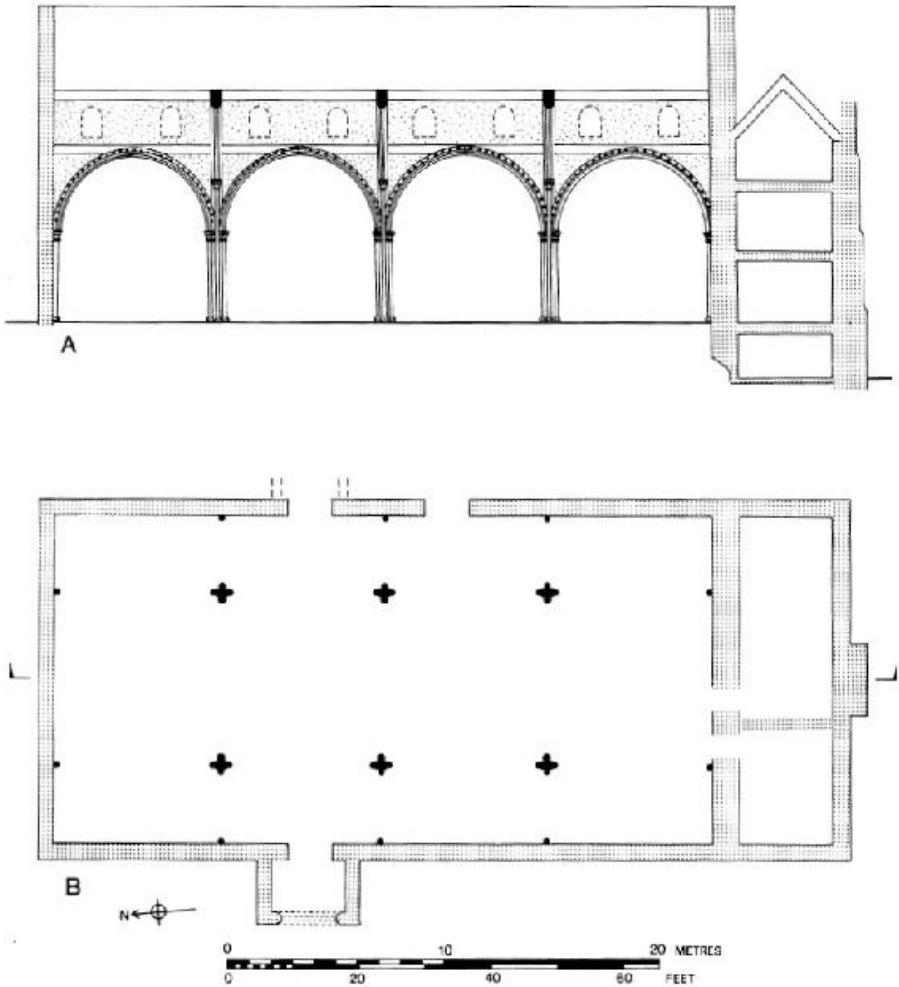


Figure 2.1 The Bishop's Palace: reconstructed plan and longitudinal section by John Blair (1987)

In 1818, J. P. Wright could say that the 'building has lately undergone a thorough repair by the munificence of its present possessor, Dr Huntingdon' (Wright 1819, 18) and there are probably more changes which have not been chronicled. The most radical remodelling since Bisse's work was carried out by the architect Philip Hardwick in 1841. The present appearance and general layout of the palace is largely the result of Hardwick's restoration and remodelling.

John Blair based many of his findings on Hardwick's drawings of the ancient structure, which survive in the Bodleian Library (Blair 1987, 65). Another set of drawings, also produced by Hardwick but only recently re-discovered, are attached to the contract and schedule of works supplied to the builder who was to carry out the alterations. These drawings and the accompanying text, although they do not deal

with the ‘bones’ of the building as do the ones in the Bodleian, indicate the concern that Hardwick felt for the ancient structure and the care he displayed towards it.

The schedule also helps to solve the mystery of the chamber block. This was noted by Blair on Isaac Taylor’s 1757 map of Hereford, free-standing to the east of the hall range and attached to it by an easily identifiable passage. Blair believed it had been demolished at the end of the 18th century, but it is still present on the 1841 tithe map of St John’s parish. The schedule demanded the demolition of ‘the Buildings called Bishop Westfaling’s Rooms and the passage leading hereto’ and, from the context, this must refer to the chamber block. The fixtures, stained glass, ‘the Norman Entrance Door’, and ‘any old Framing, Reliques or Curiousities’ were required to be salvaged. The panelling in the Westfaling Parlour was to be re-used (if sound) in the remodelled dining room.[3]

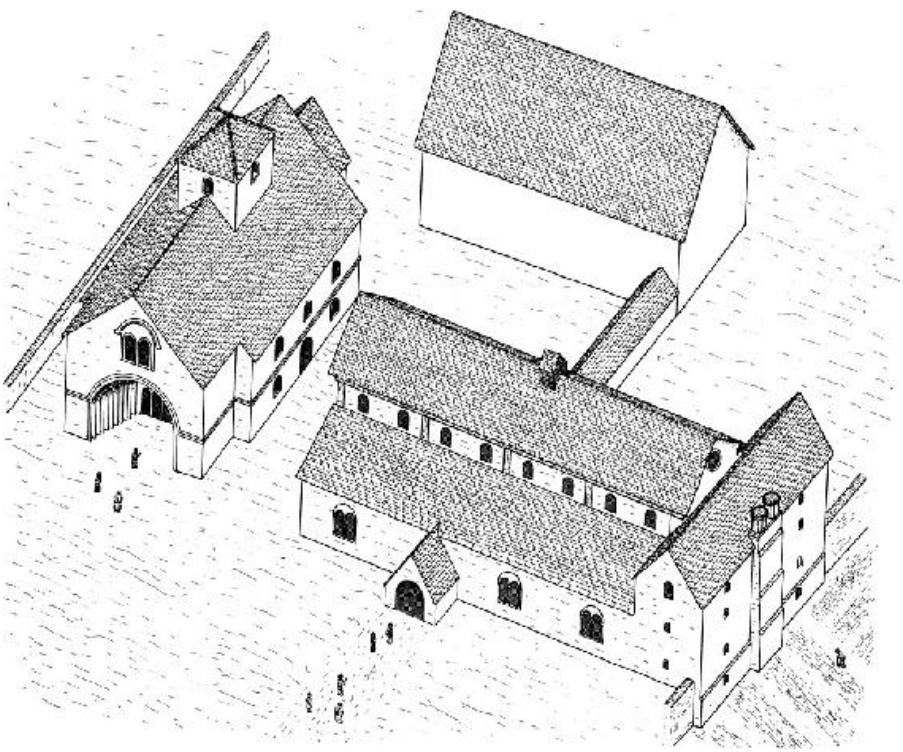


Figure 2.2 The Bishop’s Palace: the Great Hall and Chapel, perspective reconstruction drawing from the south-west (John Blair 1987)

Description

The historical and architectural significance of the earliest phase of

the Bishop's Palace has been recognised locally since the architect Philip Hardwick's alterations to the palace for Bishop Musgrave in the early 1840s. A basic record of its structure and history were published in the first Herefordshire *Inventory* volume of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments (1931, 116–17), but it was not until S. R. Jones and J. T. Smith published a more detailed investigation of it in the journal *Medieval Archaeology* in 1960 that it became better known to a national audience. A further article in the same journal in 1973 by Radford, Jope and Tonkin firmly established its cross-sectional form as a clerestoried four-bay hall, with a central nave higher than the flanking aisles. The most recent article, by John Blair (1987), reconsidered its analogues, placing it squarely in the context of a series of fashionable, ultra-modern, stone-built royal halls of the later 12th century, and reconstructed its ground plan with a three-storey chamber-block at it its south end and a detached principal chamber-block to the east approached via a pentice or covered walkway (Blair 1987, 59).

Three of the four bays of the arcade of this massive late 12th-century aisled hall survive. The building was evidently of composite construction, with masonry gable ends and aisle walls but with a timber-framed arcade and a clerestory. Three of the huge arcade posts survive. These have been cut down to a square section but with integral colonettes on all four sides, topped by scalloped capitals. Springing from the capitals are the surviving arches of the arcades, made up of pairs of curving braces face-pegged to the aisle posts and the arcade plates and enriched with separate appliqué carved sections of nail-head decoration – appropriately nailed in place. The spandrels are, or in some cases were, infilled with wattle and daub.

On the outer sides of the posts the capitals are at a lower level and were presumably for timber arches over the aisles, also probably made up of pairs of braces, the outer ones presumably sprung from the capitals of stone colonettes on the aisle walls. The massive aisle posts originally rose up higher than the arcade plates, but have since been cut down. The capitals of the inward colonettes are significantly higher than the others and probably took the ends of massive timber arches that soared up into a timber-framed clerestory over the central nave. The missing braces were probably at least as richly decorated as the existing arcade arches and their spandrels were also presumably infilled in wattle and daub. The exact design of the clerestory is impossible to deduce from the surviving structural evidence, as is the nature of the roof structure – other than it must have had a central

gabled section over the central clerestory and lean-to roofs over the aisles. The main roof was probably made up of a variant of trussed or scissor-braced rafters, but there is no evidence for the type of roof covering used.

The main hall, if it was, as generally agreed, of four bays, would have been approximately 32 m long and 17 m wide, with the apex of the roof some 15 m above the floor. It would have been, without doubt, a very impressive building, presumably heated by an open hearth (see also Fig. 4.1). There would have been windows in the aisle walls and north gable end and probably also in the sides of the clerestory.

There are indications that the present porch is a 19th-century 'restoration', a good replica of, and almost in the same position as, its original late 12th-century Romanesque predecessor (Blair 1987, 65). The great hall did not, therefore, have a cross-passage across its 'low' end in what would become the usual layout of the medieval hall house in the centuries to come, though it did present opposed doorways in the second bay from the north end, the main door and western porch standing opposite the access to a detached chamber to the east (see below).

There is cartographic and survey evidence for a narrow stone-built storeyed block built at right-angles against the south gable of the hall. This was probably of three storeys over a basement, with chambers over services and, like the hall itself, would have stood comparison with similar facilities in any of the royal households (Blair 1987, 67). There is also evidence of a larger, and perhaps grander, separate block to the north-east, linked to the hall by a cranked covered passageway (see above); this was quite possibly a detached chamber block or *camera* suitable for a prelate powerful enough to build a hall of this size.

Little is known of the other buildings that would have comprised the 12th-century palace. Immediately to the north of the hall stood the celebrated two-storey chapel built by Bishop Robert Losinga (1079–95); unnecessarily demolished in the 1730s, only its north wall now survives. There would presumably also have been a number of service buildings, including a kitchen, bakehouse and so on, together with guest accommodation and stabling, but none of these has survived. Their successors, however, are grouped around a courtyard to the west of the Great Hall, accessed through a gatehouse off Broad Street. It is quite likely that the service ranges of the late 12th century were similarly arranged and that the palace as a whole offered varying degrees of privacy or seclusion, from the busy western courtyard, to

the bishop's private *camera* to the east, beyond the great hall. Much, however, remains to be learnt about this immensely grand but still scarcely known medieval palace.

Discussion

It seems clear that the hall was built as a composite structure of both masonry and timber-framing, but in a manner that attempted to ape the grandest masonry buildings of the Angevins. Despite being part of the episcopal palace, the hall can be seen as a secular structure – albeit one in the highest strata of feudal society. Given the wealth and power of the bishop, which is reflected in the sheer size of the aisled hall, it seems clear that this would have been a building that reflected the most up-to-date styles of court; this is reflected in the various motifs used in the building.

If it was architecturally up-to-date, it probably follows that the carpentry techniques used were similarly up-to-date. The use of face pegs, halving, half-laps and copious nails for appliqué decoration was thus presumably at the leading edge of carpentry techniques, and quite different from techniques that would become ubiquitous in the later medieval period.

As well as being architecturally and structurally distinct from later buildings, the basic layout had yet to evolve fully into that relatively standard form of hall and attached cross wing(s) that also became almost universal in the grander houses of the medieval period. Apart from the entrance porch and the chamber block over possible service rooms at the south end, there is no evidence of any other attached wing, and it would appear that the bishop's private space is most likely to have been in the separate *camera* to the east, linked to the hall by a pentice.

The degree of rebuilding in the early 18th and mid-19th century left significant elements of the original late 12th-century hall in place – either hidden in the attics or cleverly boxed in at ground-floor level – but, ironically, destroyed most of the evidence for the subsequent evolution of the building during the rest of the medieval and early post-medieval periods.

Very few buildings of this size, status and date survive in Britain; indeed few medieval aisled buildings – other than barns, churches or hospitals – survive at all. By far the best preserved of these is the freestanding hall at Oakham Castle, Rutland, built around 1180 (Hill 2013). This is built of stone, has stone arcades, but still no cross-passage – although there is evidence for lost timber-framed primary extensions at either end. Not far away is the far more fragmentary surviving portion of the timber arcaded aisled hall of Leicester Castle,

slightly earlier than the hall at Hereford, and of the same width, though shorter. It too was a clerestoried structure, built in the Romanesque tradition for a royal client, although in this case the hall seems to have stood alone without an attached storeyed block (Alcock and Buckley 1973).

(2) The Cathedral Barn (Figs 2.3–2.6; Plate 7)

Introduction

The Cathedral Barn is a recently restored but fairly unremarkable-looking building of stone and brick-nogged timber framing at the north-east corner of the Cathedral Close. Its east gable faces onto St John Street, and until recently it served as the garage for the Precentor's House to the west. It thus lies in close proximity to two canonical residences: the Precentor's House 60 m to the west, and 3 St John Street, immediately adjacent to the north; the latter has a 16th-century jettied range on the frontage with an open hall of *c.*1400 behind (Shoesmith 1998; Shoesmith 2000, 299–300).

It had been known for some years that the Cathedral Barn contained structural elements of a 13th-century aisled building and this was, at one time, believed to be the predecessor of the canonical house to the north, 3 St John Street (Morriss and Shoesmith 1989). More recent investigation during the extensive refurbishment of the barn in 2010 has modified this belief. It is now known that the 13th-century timbers (dated by dendrochronology to a felling date between 1253 and 1288) have been moved from another site (which may even have been the adjacent building plot) during the late 16th or, more probably, the early 17th century (Shoesmith 2011). The original building lost its aisles and two of the five central bays when it was moved, and the surviving arcade plates and main posts were combined with a 15th-century roof from another demolished building to produce a 'new' structure. Dendrochronology gives a felling date for these roof timbers late in 1491 or early in 1492 (Shoesmith 2011). Moreover, the new building was constructed using, as footings for the south and east walls, the massive stonework of what may have been the cathedral precinct wall, possibly the wall recorded as having been built by the bishop in 1389 for the protection of the burial ground (Capes 1908, 249). The use of these stones as a foundation presupposes at least the partial demolition of the precinct wall before the construction of the barn, which the rather sparse archaeological finds from excavation of the building place in the 16th or early 17th century. A date in the 17th century may be indicated by the depiction

of the close wall on Speed's manuscript map of 1606, suggesting that it was intact at that date (Shoesmith 2011).

Historical background

The name 'Cathedral Barn' given to the building for the last fifty years or so implies a relatively recent agricultural use, although since the 19th century the building has been used as stabling and a coach house, with a row of W.C.s, and then as a garage attached to 1 The Close. A schedule of repairs carried out in 1879, which itemises the accommodation provided within the building and the extent of the work required, suggests that it had been in use as stabling and a coach house for some decades prior to the repairs. This means that for the last fifty years and more the name 'barn' had been attached to a building known to be used as stabling. How, therefore, did it get its name? Was it a recent by-name that stuck or does it mask a longer history, going back to before the building's use as stables?

Analysis of the structure indicates that the partitions within are secondary and that originally the building was one large open space. It is suggested, therefore, that it started life, in its present form, as a barn, used by the Canons' Bakehouse on the opposite corner of the Close. It is known that produce from the country benefices attached to both the canons and the Vicars' Choral was brought to the cathedral in kind.[4]

An entry in the 13th-century Episcopal Acts for Hereford[5] refers to the Chapter Barn and although this cannot be the building in question, it is evidence of the need for such a structure. Even in the 17th and 18th centuries, grain came to the bakehouse and was either stored or sold by the keeper there. In fact, there is a 17th-century marginal note in the 16th-century Chapter Act Book complaining of the lack of barns and suggesting that storage should be put on a more 'stable course'.[6] It must be said that this suggestion remains a hypothesis: no documentation has survived to confirm or deny the possibility. There are no accounts for the canons' bakehouse for the relevant dates; the Fabric and Clavigers' accounts are silent on the matter, and nothing definite has been found in the Chapter Act Books. It is perfectly possible that the barn has always been, as it ultimately became, stabling for the needs of the residentiary canons.

No. 1 The Close underwent repair and remodelling in 1879. Plans were drawn up (for the house but not for the stabling) and a schedule of works was prepared for both. The repair contract (previously mentioned) documents the accommodation to be provided within the barn and, by definition, what was already in place at that date. It describes a coach house, stable and harness room with a fireplace and

stone and brick walls. It appears that a staircase led from this harness room, or from the adjacent chaff or 'Man's Room', to a loft.[7] The reference to walling adjoining both St John Street and The Close leaves no doubt of the identity of the building. The repair instructions start with the massive stonework and go on to detail the pointing and underpinning of the stone wall next to the driving way, the re-pointing of the walls next to The Close and St John Street, and the repair and re-pointing of the south-east quoin. The roof was to be repaired and, where necessary, tiles and slates renewed. The top of the chimney stack was replaced and the decayed end tie beam and roof truss removed and replaced in some fashion unspecified, with red deal planks bolted together.

The coach house does not seem to have needed much attention, although the brick nogging in the north-east end was repaired, but in the stable new stall divisions were to be set up together with a new box enclosure and the floors were to be re-laid with improved gulleys for drainage. Wrought-iron hayracks and mangers with approved manger fittings were to be installed. The harness room required a new grate and the tiled and paved floor needed attention. The stairs needed repair to the treads and the chaff room repairs to the floor. In the loft the floor boards were worm-eaten and were to be replaced with red deal and the shutters were repaired and re-hung. In general, plaster on walls and ceilings was to be made good and whitened, windows were to be repaired and reglazed. The stable fixtures were to be stained dark oak and the rest of the woodwork painted. The weather boarding was to be treated with gas tar.

Like many stables, effectively made redundant by the spread of the use of the private motor car, this seems to have gradually been adapted to house the newer form of transport with little need for any drastic alteration.

The newly restored Cathedral Barn is now used for school parties visiting the cathedral.

Description

Whilst the Bishop's Palace has been the subject of much academic debate and has rightly been seen as one of the most important of the few surviving 12th-century houses in the country, the Cathedral Barn on the opposite, north-eastern, side of the close, was effectively ignored until its antiquity was realised after surveys were carried out in 1987 and 1989 (Morriss and Shoesmith 1989).

The building is a two-storey range just over 15 m long and about 5 m wide, its wall-plates approximately 4.5 m above present ground level. On The Close side (south) the building has a stone ground floor

with a much-altered brick-nogged, square-panelled timber frame above. The remaining outer walls are mostly timber-framed and weatherboarded. Inside there is a discontinuous first floor that has been raised in all but the western third of the building, this portion also having a partial loft.

Closer examination of the fabric has shown that virtually all of the box framing, the first-floor structure, and the entire roof structure, are quite different in character and date to the original basic carcass of the building. It is possible to extrapolate from the surviving features to reconstruct a primary timber-framed structure, probably of three and a half bays. It is important to point out, in view of later discoveries, that there were no visual indications that this earliest phase had been dismantled and then re-erected.

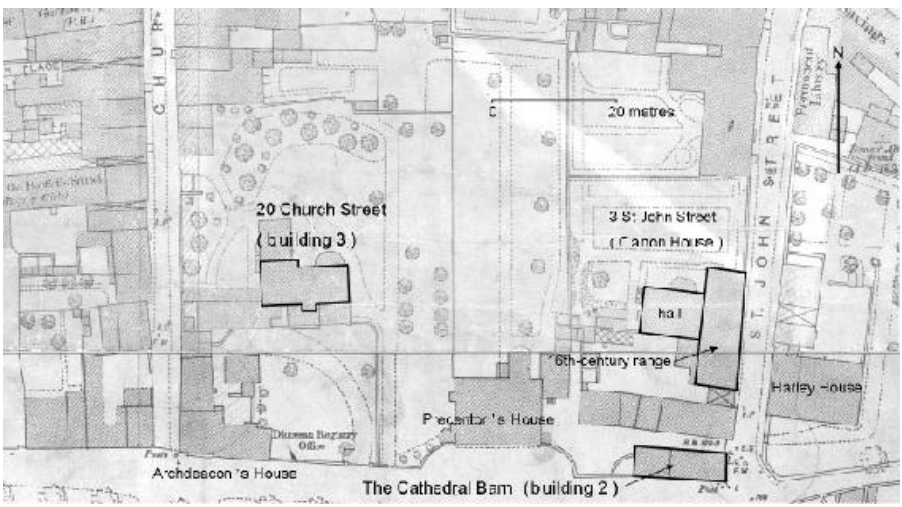


Figure 2.3 Canonical houses on the north side of the Close: location plan based on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1886

Seven of its original ten bay posts survive more or less intact, supporting the original wall-plates. Apart from the eastern third of the north plate, both of these are intact. The south plate is in two sections joined by a splayed and tabled scarf joint. Evidence in the soffit of the wall-plates indicated that, except for the bay posts, onto which they are tenoned, the framing beneath was completely open. The only other timbers in it was a series of upbraces from the posts to the plates, of which four survived and the rest can be deduced from empty mortices. These braces are, or were, fully mortice-and-tenoned into the posts at their lower ends, but connected to the plates by single-pegged notched half-lap joints on their inner faces. There was thus, below each plate, a very simple pattern of framing of posts and paired

straight up-braces – forming an open arcade. The pattern changes in the truncated easternmost bay.

The primary plate survives in the south frame and oversails the last original bay post by about 600 mm. In the eastern face of the post is a mortice for an up-brace, but this is higher up the post than the equivalent mortices further west. If there was an up-brace, it would have met the plate just beyond its present end. If the same pattern of paired braces was continued in this lost bay, it seems reasonable to suppose that it would have been shorter than the main bays simply because of the height of this missing brace.

In the top of the plates above each bay post are open double-dovetail slots, presumably designed to take the ends of tie-beams since removed. In one or other sides of the posts, only 200 mm below the plates, are empty notched half-lap mortices that must have taken the bottom ends of up-braces from the posts to, or more likely past, the missing tie-beams. The precise design of the original roof structure supported on these main plates is unknown, but the missing braces from the posts could indicate that there was a truss at each bay division that contained within it a type of scissor bracing.

Re-used as a post in the rebuilt west gable is a timber that may have once been a tie-beam; cut into it is a diagonal slot of the type that would have been required if the braces rising from the bay posts had been passing braces crossing the ties and joining with other timbers – perhaps the opposing principal rafters – in the roof truss. Also in the tops of the plates are holes cut to take the rafter feet and, more confusingly, paired empty single-dovetailed slots that will be discussed later.

There are no indications in the primary bay posts to suggest any internal floors and it seems that the building was originally of just one, very tall, storey. In the outer faces of two of the southern posts and one of the northern ones there are empty mortices about 2.8 m above ground level that presumably took the ends of rails associated with extensions on either side of the building. The outsides of the other posts are inaccessible.

Overall, the available evidence for this primary phase of building suggests that it was a long, tall, aisled structure. The wall-plates were, in fact, arcade plates and the bay posts, arcade posts. This building was three and a half bays long – and thus extended further than it does now. The overall width is not easy to demonstrate as the width of the aisles is unknown. The construction techniques used in the building, such as the notched half-laps and the splayed-and-tabled scarf joints in the wall-plates, suggest an early date, probably in the

mid-13th century. This has since been confirmed by the tree-ring analysis, which yielded a felling date-range of 1253–88 (Tyers 1996).

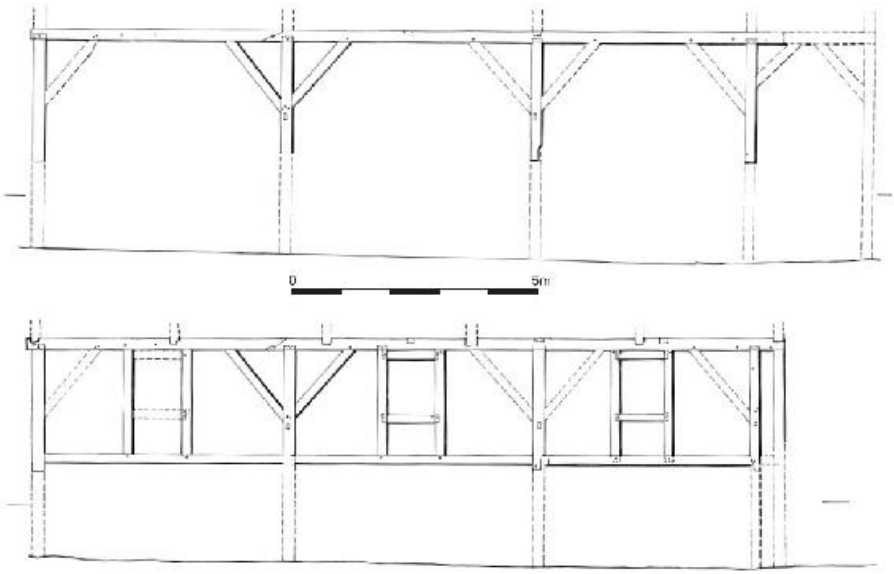


Figure 2.4 Outline survey of the existing timber-framing of the south elevation of the Cathedral Barn (bottom) with, above, a partial reconstruction of the arcade frame of the aisled building from which it was reconstructed

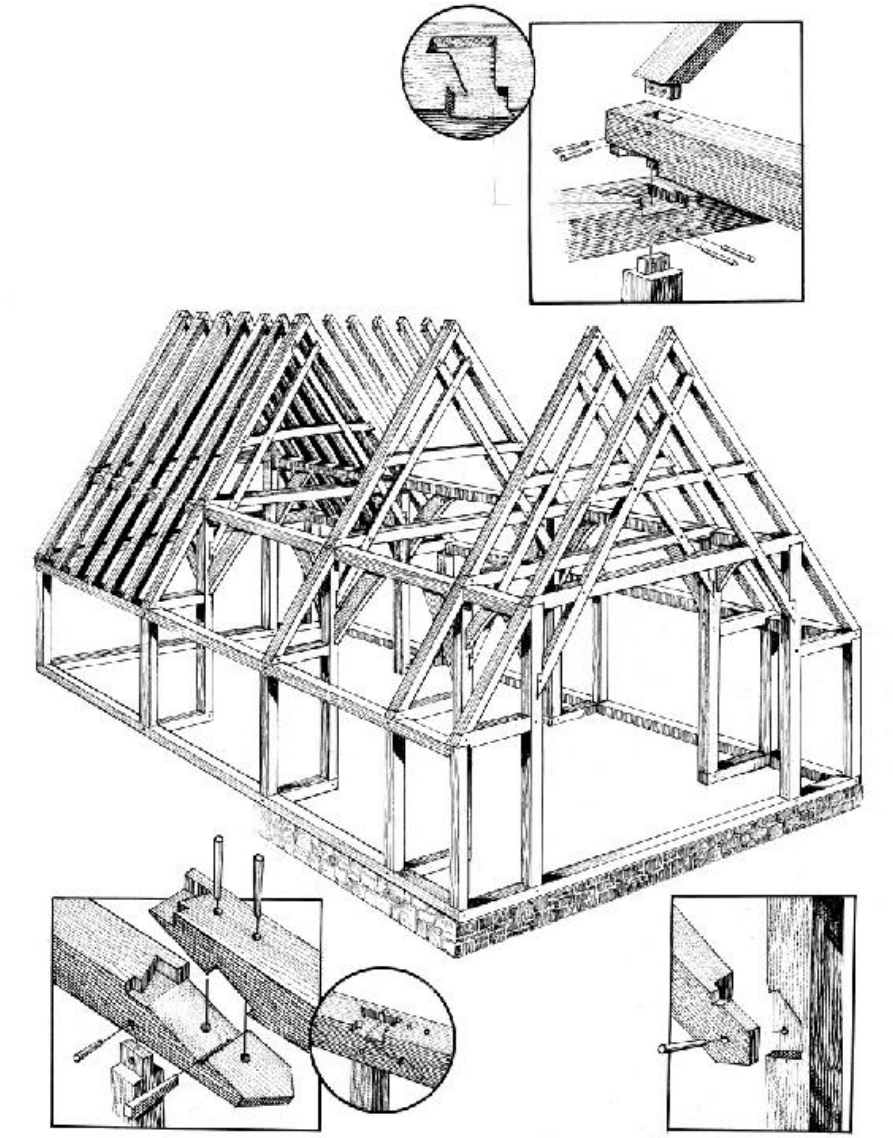


Figure 2.5 Axonometric reconstruction by Bryan Byron of the original framing and constructional details of the Cathedral Barn, based on the surviving structural evidence. It is now known that the medieval timbers were moved and re-erected on this site

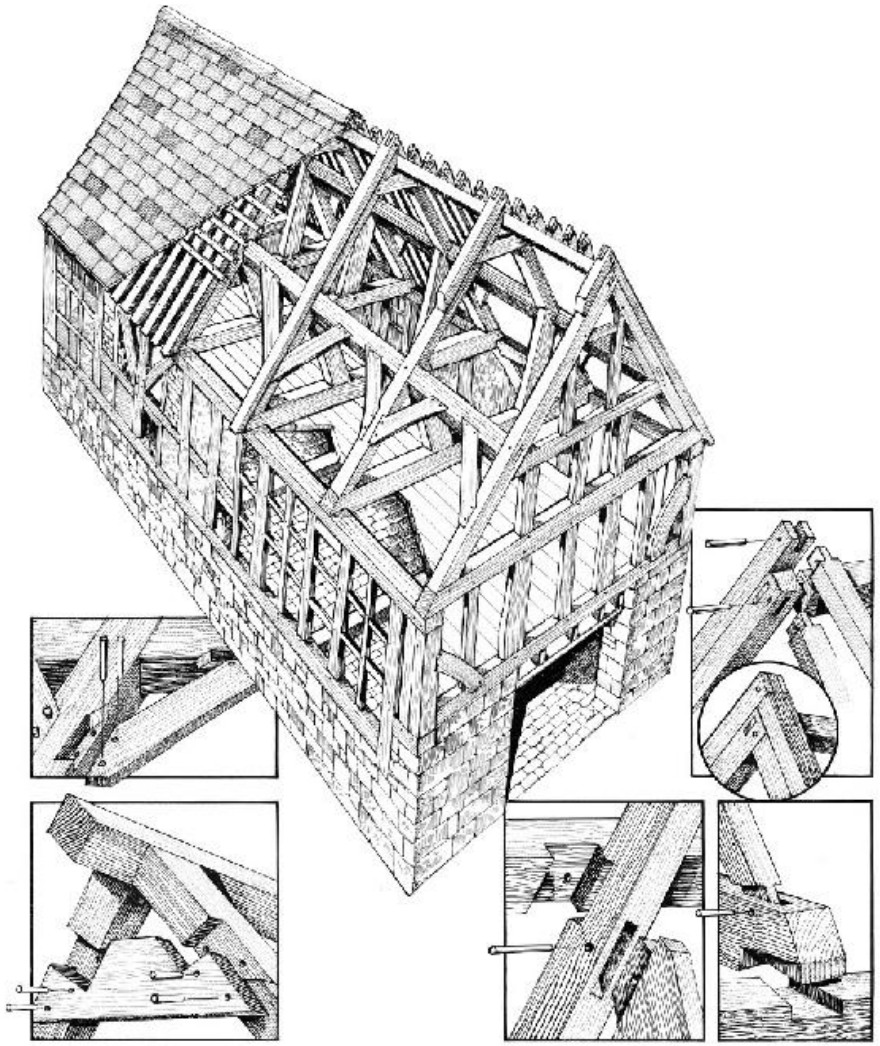


Figure 2.6 Axonometric reconstruction by Bryan Byron of the Cathedral Barn and its jointing details as it was probably reconstructed in the 17th century; the broad opening in the east gable end is conjectural

The function of the building is less clear. There is a complete absence of surviving decoration and no indications that any ever existed. There are no real clues in the internal arrangements. The building seems to have consisted of one long, high, aisled space, the only differences being in the assumed narrower, easternmost bay. The plain decoration suggests that it was simply, as its historic name has suggested, a large barn owned by the cathedral.

Despite the debate as to the building's function, its date has now been firmly established and whilst its mid-13th-century elements are fragmentary, they still form an important early survival of the city's

architectural history. The existing plain-gabled five-bay queen-post roof was clearly a later feature, and is assumed to be contemporary with the existing side frames.

After establishing the differences between the types of framing present, a reasonable working hypothesis of the building's development was possible. It seems to have begun as a large, very plain, aisled timber-framed structure, probably a barn, of the 13th century, which was moved, re-roofed and shorn of its aisles in the post-medieval period. It had clearly been adapted over time to meet the changing requirements of its owners. The original report on the building (Morriss and Shoesmith 1989) suggested that archaeological excavation below the building would lead to a better understanding of its development; what was not expected was that such work, some twenty years later, would entirely demolish the working hypothesis of the building's development that was then current.

Discussion

The recent work on the Cathedral Barn is an instructive illustration of the value of holistic investigation of complex historic buildings – in this case with structural survey and dendrochronology, documentary evidence, and excavation within the building footprint – and the way such research may impact upon hypotheses formulated from less comprehensive approaches. For centuries the significance of the building was unappreciated until its 'rediscovery' in the late 1980s as an aisled structure with 13th-century characteristics, a date subsequently confirmed by dendrochronology. It was clearly a very important building in Hereford's architectural history and was thought to be quite possibly the earliest known survivor among the cathedral's canonical residences; it was this hypothesis that was presented in the first, unpublished, draft of the present volume, the *Secular Buildings of Hereford*, in the mid-1990s.

Twenty years later, excavations beneath the building showed conclusively that it had been built, in the form in which it survives, in the post-medieval period over the footings of the precinct wall, which had still, according to John Speed's map of 1610, been standing in the early 17th century. While it is still, or at least it contains, a significant example of 13th-century architecture, it is clear that this has been re-located to its present position, after being shorn of its aisles and given a re-used roof structure. The earliest framing shows few signs of having been completely dismantled and then rebuilt, so it is possible that, with its aisles and roof removed, it was moved while still assembled – perhaps from not too far away – such a process being by no means rare. The lack of decoration on the 13th-century timbers

suggests that they were probably part of a barn (rather than an aisled hall). There is no direct evidence of course for the original home of the 13th-century frame, but the suggestion that it was moved to its corner site without being dismantled suggests strongly that it came from close by, most likely from one of the nearby canonical residences. While it could have come from Harley House, across St John Street to the east, or the Precentor's House to the west, the nearest and most likely candidate is 3 St John Street, just a couple of metres to the north, though it is substantially earlier than the 15th-century hall and 16th-century frontage block recorded there (Shoesmith 2000). It is, however, a reminder, as are the following two case-studies, of the current limitations of our evidence for the medieval canonical residences as functioning households – where open halls have survived but the service ranges and ancillary buildings that supported them have not.

(3) 20 Church Street (Figs 2.3, 2.7–2.17; Plates 8–10)

Introduction

No. 20 Church Street lies in the heart of the city, tucked away within a large garden behind the east side of Church Street. Such a spacious open area in single ownership is a highly unusual survival in a modern city centre and broadly represents one of the ancient canonical plots that surround the Cathedral Close. It is bounded by two further canonical plots: the Archdeacon's house to the south, and the Precentor's house to the east; to the north are secular plots fronting Church Street. The garden now extends to a boundary wall along the Church Street frontage though there is historical and cartographic evidence that this frontage was formerly built-up with shops. Its containing boundaries may be ancient, but they have not remained unchanged, the historical evidence (below) demonstrating that No. 20 represents an amalgamation, in the early 14th century, of two older canonical plots, and that the property had once extended west of Church Street.

In 1980 the building was in a poor state of repair and was refurbished. Much of it was stripped back to its original medieval fabric and the opportunity was taken to undertake a comprehensive structural survey. Until then, the significance of the building had not been appreciated, due to later brick cladding, inserted partitions, decorative finishes and an inserted attic floor that hid the roof structure. What was revealed was one of the earliest timber-framed

buildings in a western English town: a first-floor hall, with Hereford's only known crown-post roof, dated from historical sources, supported by dendrochronology, to 1328. Opposed entrances in the long walls at its western end are indicative of the low end of the hall; one probably led to a garderobe, the other probably gave access from an external staircase. There is documentary evidence for a chamber block added at the eastern end *c.*1400 and demolished in the 18th century, and a pair of ground-floor doorways that appear to indicate service rooms at the western end. The surviving building was clearly once part of a larger complex: this is implicit in the surviving fabric and explicit in both the archaeological evidence and a 16th-century inventory, which lists the hall along with six chambers, a parlour, buttery, kitchen and a 'tavern'.

Figure 2.7 20 Church Street from the north-east, c.1990; the main section contains the 14th-century first-floor hall. Immediately to the right of the small modern rear wing, the footings of a detached medieval building, probably a kitchen block, were found by excavation in 1991

Figure 2.8 The rediscovered crown-post roof over the hall of 20 Church Street prior to the removal of the post-medieval ceiling; it has been 'strung' for a detailed hand survey – in a pre-digital age.

Figure 2.9 The ground floor of the hall range of 20 Church Street, showing the braced bridging beam of one of the intermediate frames and the absence of any infill framing at this level to divide up the space

Historical background

As far back as can be discovered, 20 Church Street has been one of the official houses granted by the bishop to the Canons Residentiary of Hereford Cathedral. In tracing the history of the building this has been both a disadvantage and an advantage: a disadvantage because, within the cathedral 'family', no title deeds were required; an advantage because the canonical houses and some at least of the transfers are recorded in the bishops' registers. It should be noted that at no time prior to the 19th century were the canonical houses necessarily assigned to individual offices: officials were granted whichever house became available.

In the early years of the 14th century, some of the houses were unoccupied and falling into ruin for lack of canons in residence. Two empty canonical houses, once inhabited by Master Thomas of St Omer and Robert of Icclesham, in what is now Church Street, then known as Cabache Lane, were deemed to be too small and therefore unsuitable for canonical use. In 1328 the Bishop and the Dean and Chapter agreed that the two Cabache Lane properties should be united, to create both a better dwelling and to reduce the number of canonical houses (Capes 1912). Just what was done in 1328 to amalgamate the two houses is not known, but it was sufficient to allow William de Fownhope, one of the signatories to the 1328 agreement, to move in the following year. By 1397, Fownhope had been succeeded by Thomas Staunton, John Boter and John Brydewode, all canons of Hereford, while on the next plot David de Jak, who died in 1396, was followed by Thomas Guildford.

In 1397 the house was in need of repair and modernisation. In the manner of the time it was leased to John Carpenter, alias Menysere, who was, within four years (i.e. by 1401), required to reinstate the hall and the other houses on both sides of the road as they were before. In addition he was to modernise the house by adding to the hall a chamber of two bays (*'sex postibus'*). John paid two silver marks per annum for the premises but was granted a 41-year lease so that he could recoup his expenditure and make a profit on the building by letting it. During this time he was not to pull down any of the property nor sell stone, timber or tiles off the site. If he wished to sell the property he was to offer it to the Bishop and Dean and Chapter first. The agreement not only portrays the amount of repair work needed but indicates the materials of the existing house – timber,

stone and tiles – and shows that the hall, presumably that built for William de Fownhope, had been built long enough to need repair, but not rebuilding. It also suggests comfort and private space were becoming more important (Capes 1914).

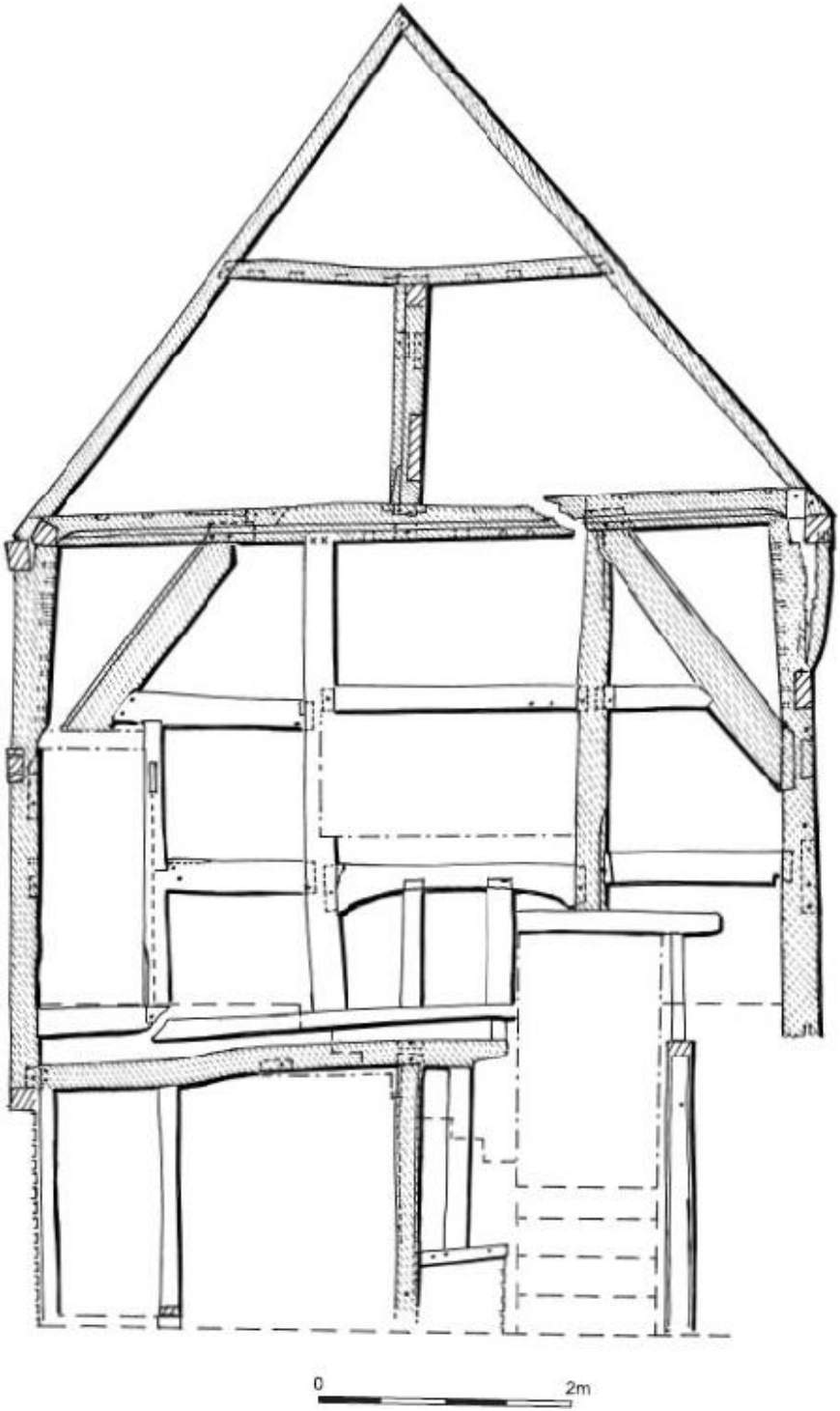


Figure 2.10 The complicated framing of the west gable of 20 Church Street. This is the interior face, surveyed prior to restoration, with the known primary timbers shaded

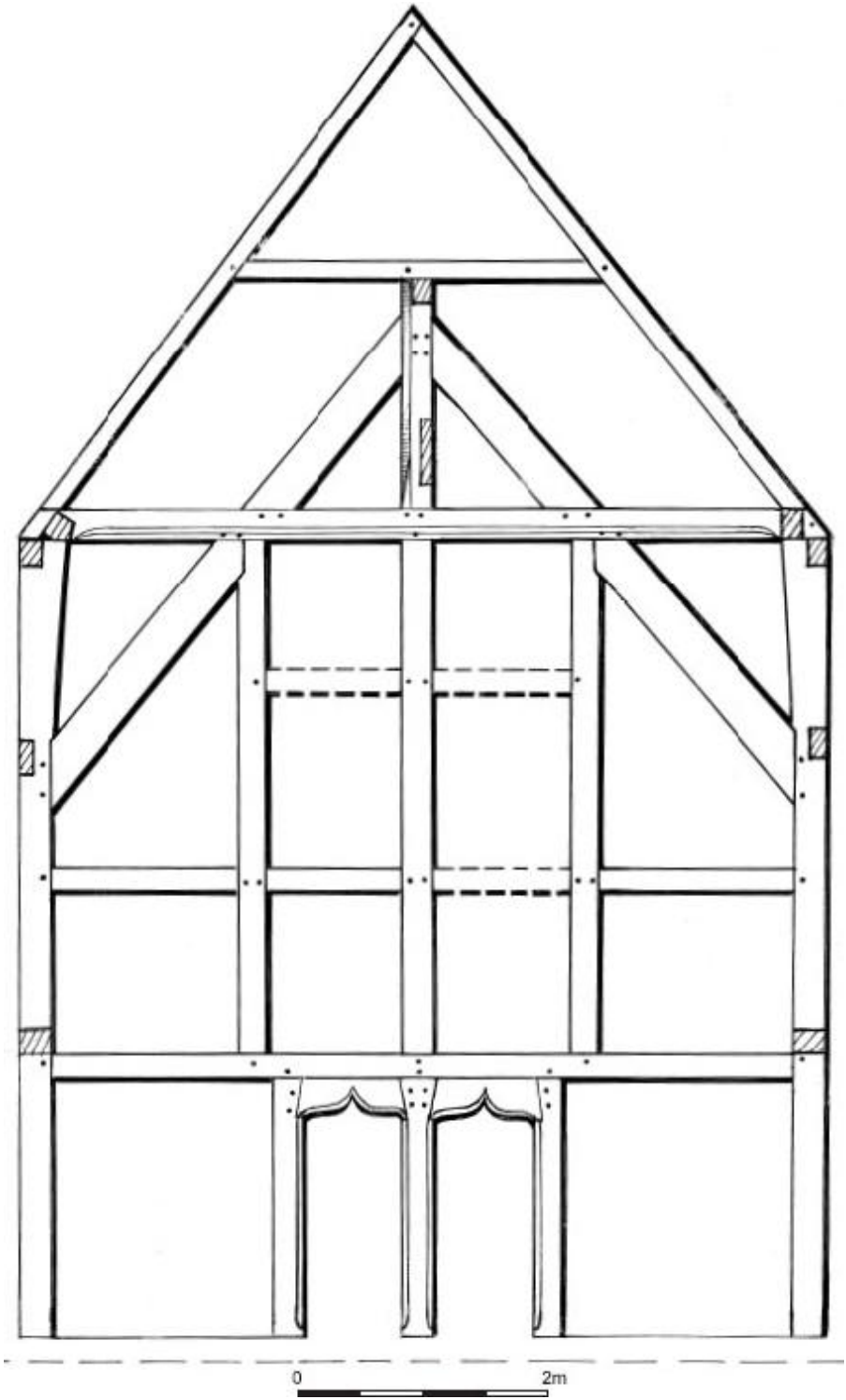


Figure 2.11 Suggested reconstruction of the interior face of the original phase of the west gable frame of the hall range of 20 Church Street. Note how the alignment of the straight

down-braces from the crown post was deliberately continued in the angle braces of the framing below. The details of the paired doors on the ground floor are hypothetical but based on precedents elsewhere in the building

In 1428 the house, now described as a 'former' canonical house was again let, this time to David Leche, citizen of Hereford, for 90 years at the same rent as previously. His lease includes shops, which were a feature of the property until the late 18th century, and were probably the premises facing the street shown on Taylor's map of 1757.[8] Such shops were a feature of medieval Church Street.[9] Leche's property lay between Master John Staneway's canonical house on the south, the lane leading to the tenement of John Radenor on the north, extended from the road called 'Cabachelane' on the west, and Master John Berewe's garden on the east (probably 1 The Close). By 1440 it is again described as a canon's residence, belonging to Canon Ashby.[10]

In the mid-16th century 20 Church Street was granted to Robert Crowley, clerk. An inventory of his furnishings, as distinct from the fixtures that went with the house, has been found among the City Corporation archives dated *c.*1514/15. No Robert Crowley can be traced among the cathedral clerics in the early 16th century and it seems that this document was misdated when the contents of the corporation 'sacks' were transferred to more satisfactory storage. Nevertheless the information is relevant: a Robert Crowley, a renowned Protestant writer and printer, was made Archdeacon of Hereford in 1559 and remained in post until 1565. Crowley had strong reformist principles, evinced in his books, and was deprived of his two benefices in London in 1565/66 and imprisoned for resisting the use of surplices on his choir. The loss of his Hereford position in the same year may have been the result of these views, and the very difficult script (resembling early 16th-century handwriting) in which the inventory is written may reflect a need for haste in quitting the house.

The inventory shows that the house was large, consisting of the Parlour, the 'Chamber wherein he dyde lye', 'The Inner Chamber', 'The grete Chamber next the Cabage lane', 'A Chamber of Boks', the 'Outer Chamber', another Chamber, the 'tavern' (probably cellar), the buttery, the hall and the kitchen. In his 'Chamber of Boks', Crowley had no fewer than 30 large books and a 187 small books without clasps; some of these must have been from his own press.[11] The hall was heated by an 'iron Stooffe' (stove) probably brought back from his exile on the continent.

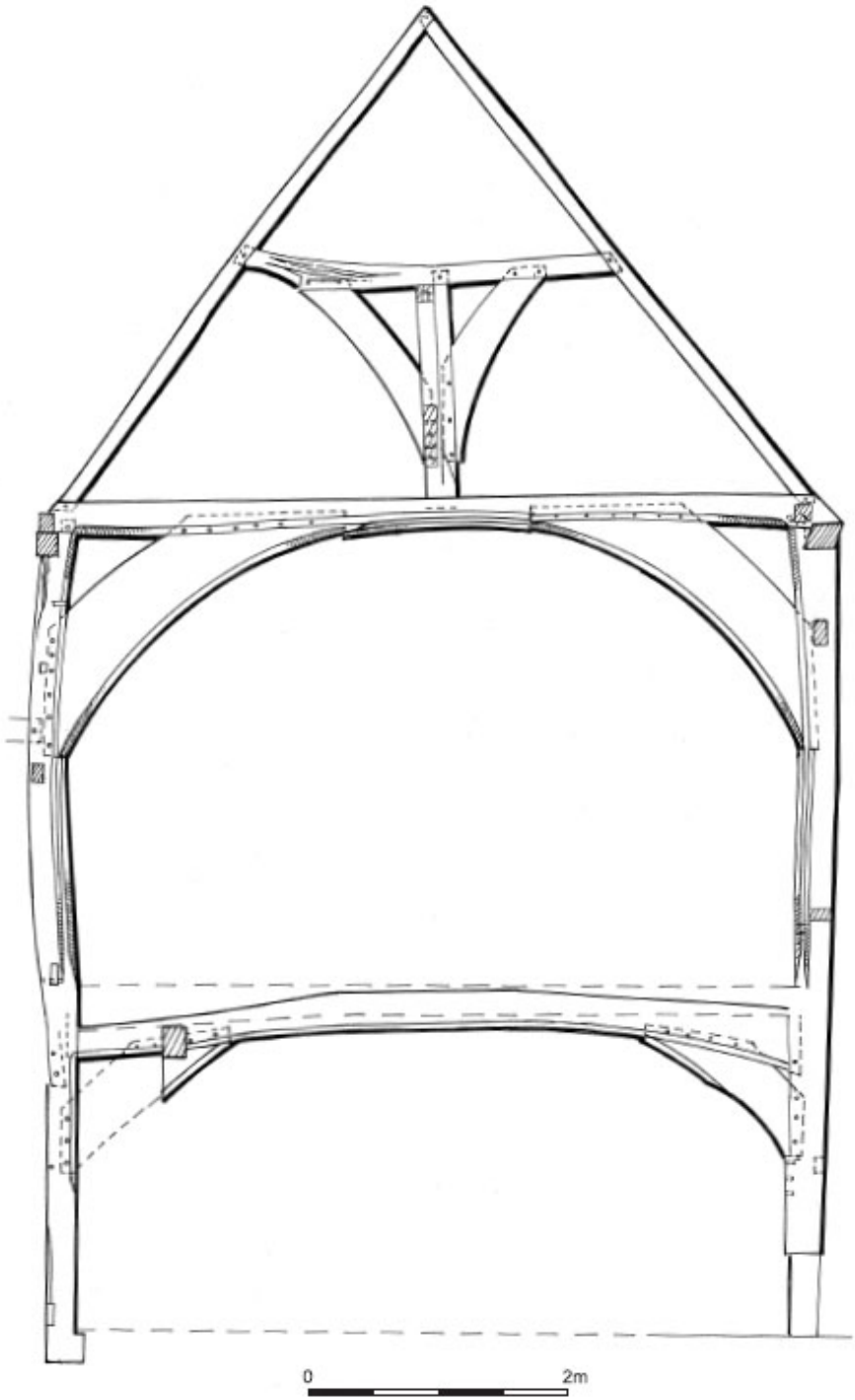


Figure 2.12 Cross-section of the hall range of 20 Church Street as Watkins to Master Simon Smythe, D.Law, Archdeacon surveyed prior to restoration, but with accretions ignored

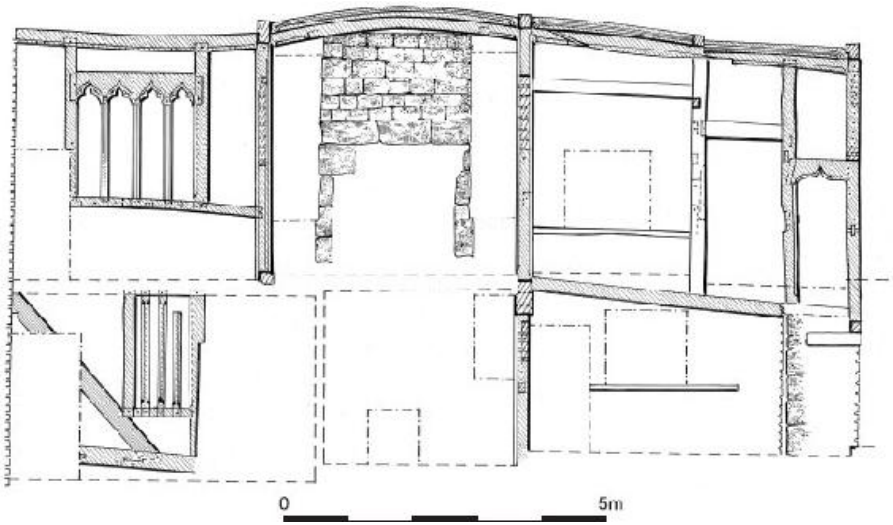


Figure 2.13 The interior face of the south frame of the hall of 20 Church Street as found, with original timber elements shaded. The frame had effectively had its back broken by settlement either side of the primary stack

From this point on the bishops' registers cease to provide sufficient detail to allow subsequent occupants of 20 Church Street to be identified. Only an isolated entry in 1579 records the transfer of a house in Broad Cabbage Lane from John of Hereford.[12] Other documents record the later history of the house. After the Civil War this, like other canons' houses, fell into disrepair and eventually, in 1717, after an Act of Parliament (1704) and a complaint by the Chapter (1714), Canon William Watts acquired a strip of land from the Corporation of Hereford to provide extra ground for a building extension which was erected the same year.[13] This rebuilding probably related to the kitchens next to Church Street which were pulled down in the 19th century. Watts died in 1722.

Dr John Hoadley, his successor, made plans for more rebuilding in July 1723 and was given leave 'to pull down the building at the end of the Great Parlor & another peece of building belonging to his Canonical house in consideration of his repairing & improving of the Tenement belonging thereto'.[14] The Great Parlour was probably the term used in the 18th century for the original hall. A dated brick in the east gable records this work.

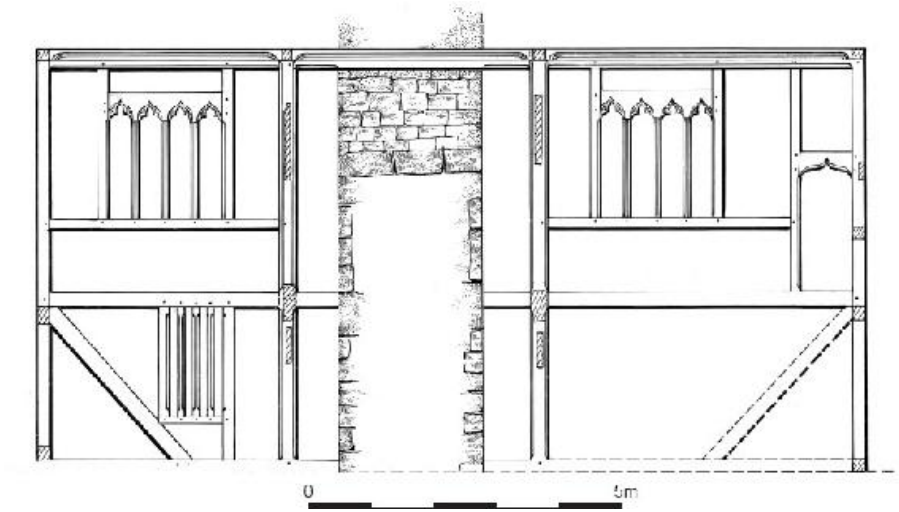


Figure 2.14 Reconstruction of the interior face of the south frame of 20 Church Street; the only section in doubt is the ground floor to the west (or right) where little primary framing survived

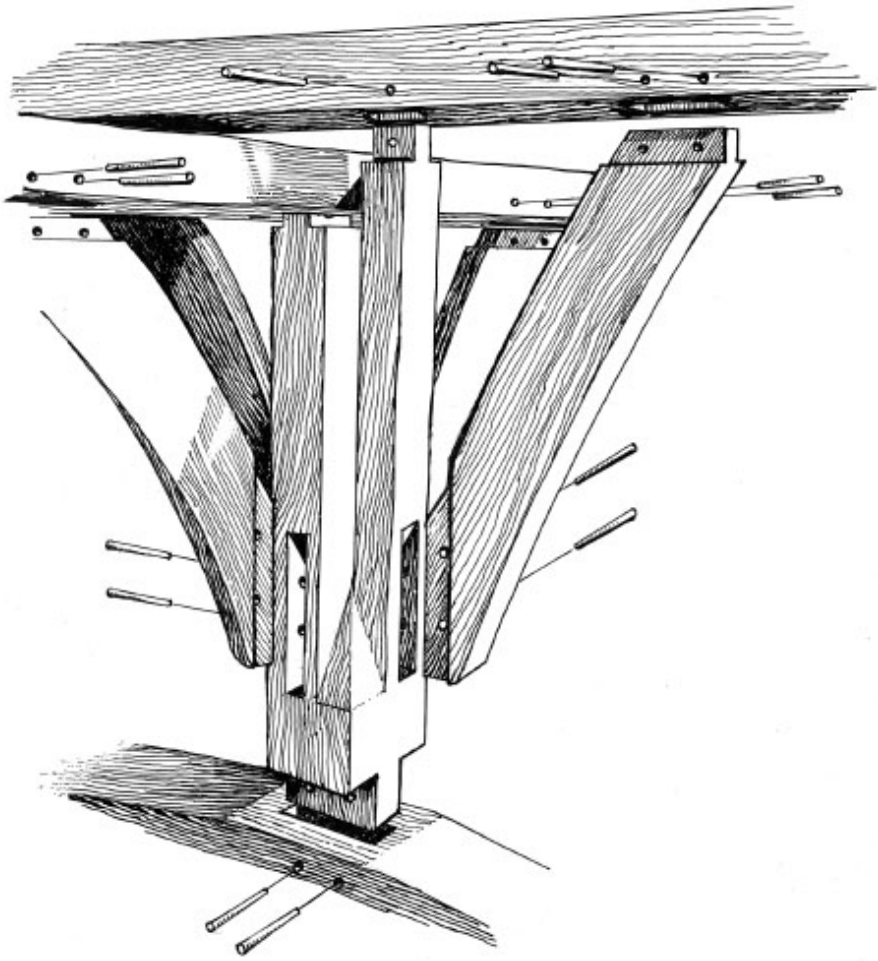


Figure 2.15 Exploded view of the jointing of the crown-post and braces at 20 Church Street; note the asymmetry of the design and the half-pyramid stop at the base of the crown-post

Extensive but unspecified rebuilding continued under Canon Humphrey Wishaw in 1761.[15] Soon after this the house ceased to be occupied by canons and was leased out by them to private citizens.[16] From 1857 it became the home of the Cathedral organists, the last of whom, George Robertson Sinclair, was a friend of Elgar, who stayed at the house. Sinclair's bulldog Dan was immortalised in Variation 11 of Elgar's Enigma Variations. When Sinclair died the house was let, although the room over the stable and coach house called the 'Ark', traditionally used by the choristers, was exempted from the lease. A note on the lease made in 1919 states that 'Mr Huell says the walls are in an awful state'. The house was sold by the Church Commissioners in 1930.[17]

Description

At the core of the complex is a medieval two-storey, three-bay, timber-framed building with a crown-post roof, originally consisting of a single large chamber on each floor level. The ground floor was no simple undercroft, having once had a pair of good doorways in its west gable wall, being well-lit, and probably heated. A cellar, at least part of which appears to be medieval, lies beneath its western bay. The first floor was a much higher-status space, open to the apex of the roof, lit by large windows in the south elevation, reached through decorative doorways and heated by a large fireplace in a lateral stack.

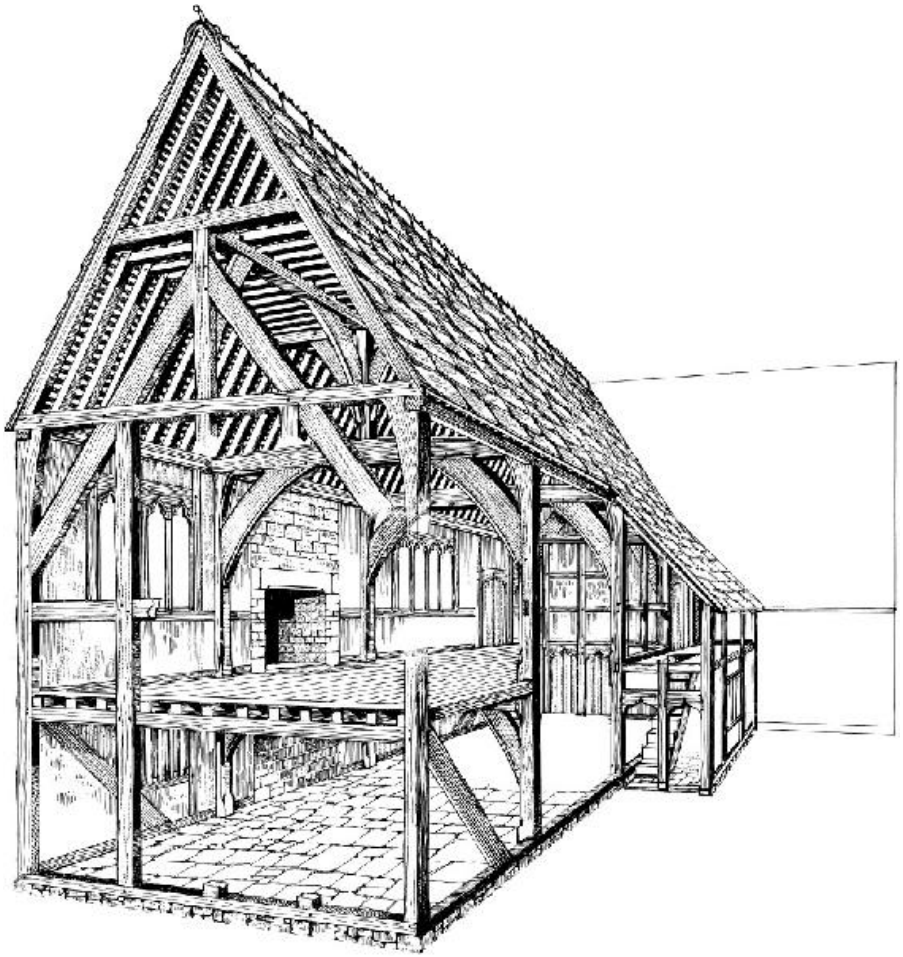


Figure 2.16 Axonometric reconstruction by Bryan Byron of the primary phase of 20 Church Street

This range is approximately 10.6 m long and 6.1 m wide. The east

gable end has been largely rebuilt in early Georgian brickwork, the north elevation is clad in later 18th-century brick, and the west gable is rendered. The height of the ground floor is, on average, just over 2.5 m, whilst the height of the first floor up to the wall-plates, at 4.8 m, clearly demonstrates the superior status of the upper floor.

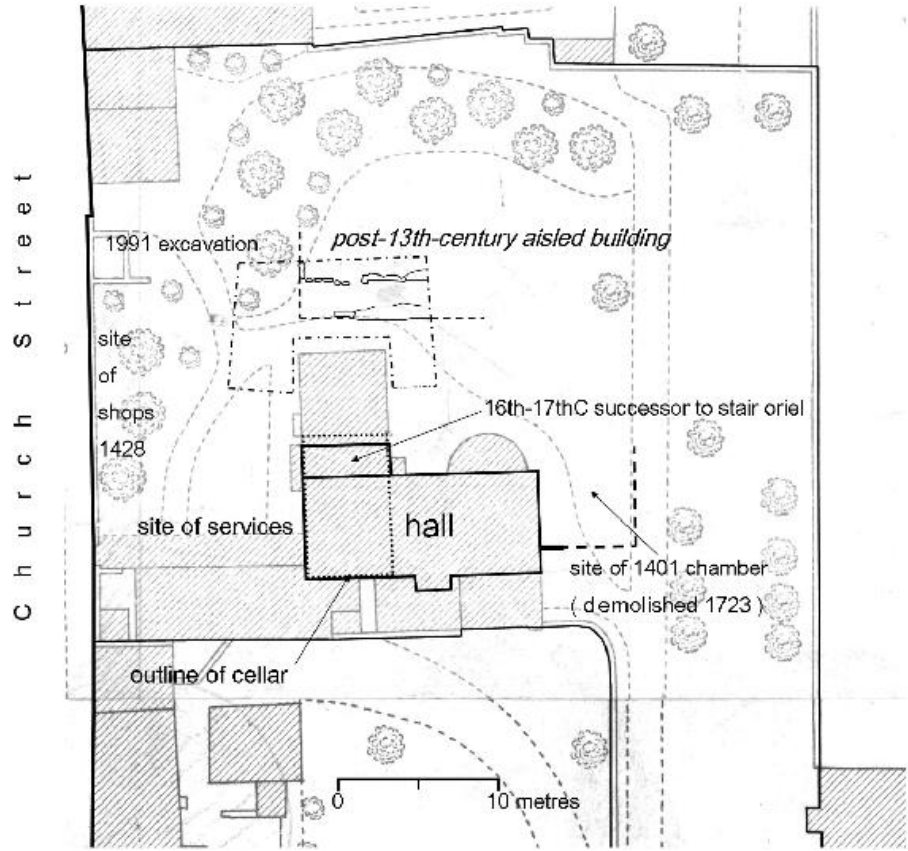


Figure 2.17 Site plan of 20 Church Street based on the 1886 Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan

Most of the basic timber carcass survives *in situ* but many of the lesser timbers in the framing have been lost. In general, the constructional design of the building relies on the strength of the cross-frames, the wall-plates, and the roof structure. The long side-frames are virtually relegated to the role of infill screen walls and have limited structural purpose.

The east gable frame has been removed, leaving only a fragment of the roof truss. The west gable has been considerably rebuilt on several occasions but is still timber-framed. The substantial corner posts have gently flared jowled heads and survive at first-floor level, as does the

southern half of the first-floor girding beam. A central ground-floor stud survives, moulded on the inner face, and has in its head redundant mortices that indicate there were doorways either side, presumably opening outwards from the building. The empty mortice for the south jamb of the southern of this pair of doorways survives in the soffit of the first-floor plate. The up-braces from the corner posts to the moulded truss tie survive, along with the northern of what had originally been three-storey-high first-floor studs. Sections of a low interrupted rail between the corner posts survive and there seems to have been an upper rail just between the three studs.

The two intermediate frames display no signs of original partitions on either floor level. The slightly cambered first-floor bridging beams are stiffened by short curving up-braces from the bay posts. At this level all of these timbers have simple stopped chamfers.

The first-floor portions of the bay posts are slightly more elaborately chamfered on both sides and have half-diamond basal stops just above the floor. Substantial plain-chamfered arch-braces support the moulded tie-beams of the trusses. Empty spandrels between the braces and tie-beams were possibly once infilled with wattle-and-daub simply rammed into place – there being no stave grooves.

Little survives of the northern side frame, especially on the ground floor, as this part of the building has largely been refaced in brick. At its western end is a primary first-floor doorway with an ogee head and external chamfers, its eastern jamb originally braced. Part of a first-floor mid-rail survives, but there are no indications of any other frame members.

The southern side frame is more intact. The remains of the stack is built of coursed blocks of sandstone and has weathered shoulders; it fits well into the framing – which has settled on either side of it – and is respected by the chamfers of the wall-plate, which sits on an internal set-back in its masonry. It is large enough to have served fireplaces on both floor levels, but any original ones do not survive. To the east there is a straight down-brace from the lost south-eastern corner post to a short surviving length of sole-plate. Interestingly, this plate has an empty double-pegged mortice in its soffit that might indicate the former existence of framing below it – suggesting perhaps a cellar, although the existing cellar does not extend this far east. The brace takes one end of the sill of a primary four-light timber window. The closely set mullions are plain chamfered with cut run-out stops, but there is no evidence of glazing or a shutter rebate. On the first floor above there is a grander and larger primary window. Tenoned

between the jambs is a single-piece lintel into which are carved the ornate ogee heads of its four lights. The mullions and jambs are moulded and there is some evidence to indicate that there was surface decoration on the slightly wider central mullion, subsequently defaced.

The framing to the west of the stack is largely missing at ground-floor level and has been remodelled above. However, it retains the first-floor girding beam. At the extreme west end is a narrow doorway with an ogee-arched head echoing the larger one opposite. This differs in being chamfered on the inner face. Evidence in the remaining framing suggests the former existence of a window matching that in the eastern bay. The rest of the present framing is re-used and re-modelled.

The wall-plates – each of two sections, scarf-jointed – were faced by a bay-length moulded cornice between the principals, most of which survives. The junction between principal post, tie-beam and wall-plate is of 'normal' assembly, with the wall-plate cut into the top of the posts and over-sailed by the ties.

The crown-post roof appears to be unique in Hereford; no other such roofs have been identified within the city and they are quite rare in the county as a whole. It is clear that the roof was open to its apex, despite traces of raddle red petering out above the level of the rafter collars. The design of crown posts and their bracing is often seen as being critical in the dating of such roofs, and also as a useful clue to the regional variations of the type. Unfortunately, this particular roof has different types of bracing in the end and intermediate trusses. In the west gable, the crown post has straight down-braces from the corner posts below. The evidence for the east gable is lacking. The resultant shape echoes and reinforces the overall gabled profile of the roof. Conversely, in the two intermediate trusses, there are curving up-braces from the crown posts to the collars. Curved up-braces from the crown posts support the collar purlin which, like the wall-plates, is in two sections, joined in a simple splayed scarf joint. Oddly, the collar purlin is not centrally positioned: it is, instead, slightly off-set and clasped on top of the northern half of each post, so that the bracing pattern is not quite symmetrical either. The northern corners of the crown posts are not chamfered, but the southern ones are given exaggerated chamfers with half-pyramid basal stops. On the eastern intermediate truss, the work was done relatively crudely and the chamfers were little more than shallow rebates with splayed bases. The braces to the collar purlin are plain chamfered, but the braces to the rafter-collars are not.

Apart from in the eastern bay – which was subject to a major upgrading in the early 19th century – most of the original first-floor joists, of thick scantling and laid flat, survive, even in the western bay where these drop towards the west gable and levelling joists have been added above them.

It is clear that the surviving hall block of 20 Church Street, with just one large chamber on each of its two floors, could not have functioned in isolation. There is structural, historical and archaeological evidence to indicate that it was the focal point of a reasonably large complex of buildings. The first-floor doorways at the western end of each side indicate the existence of attached structures. The quality of the northern door suggests that such a structure on this side would have been more than a garderobe tower or simple external stair, and the fact that the chamfer is external suggests that the door opened into the main room. In a post-medieval remodelling a timber-framed stair oriel was built at this point utilising re-used timbers. It is suggested that this replaced a structure of similar size and function, of which fragments survive. The evidence of the medieval oriel is limited to parts of its eastern frame, and empty mortices in the framing of the hall block.

The smaller south doorway was chamfered on the inside, which presumably means that the door opened outwards into a lost structure. Its external face was fairly badly weathered; mortices on the external face indicate some timber-framed projection at this point but are not consistent enough to indicate its design or function. Fragments of a tall masonry wall below the doorway, projecting from the main block, could be associated with a stair base or a garderobe chute. If the masonry is medieval, then a garderobe chute is a strong possibility.

At ground-floor level, the lost pair of centrally positioned doorways in the west frame probably had ogee-arched heads and would have led into an adjacent range. There was no surviving evidence of any doorways at first-floor level. The rebuilding in brick of the east gable wall of the main block in the 1720s means there are no surviving elements of the medieval timber-frame below tie-beam level. However, the documentary evidence suggests that a two-bay chamber block adjoined to the east of the hall block, built by 1401 and demolished shortly after 1723 (see above). Supporting archaeological evidence is limited to the recording of what may have been the footing of the south wall of this structure, represented by a pre-18th-century, east–west robber trench seen in one of a series of test pits dug at intervals along the east side of the standing building (Shoesmith

and Thomas 1990).

The cellar

The cellar is a rectangular masonry structure lying beneath the western bay of the hall but extending northwards, beneath the probable stair oriel and its 17th-century replacement. Although subjected to some archaeological investigation in 1990–91, it was never comprehensively surveyed before the walls were rendered, and a number of issues remain unresolved in terms of its relationship with the building above. Crucially, it has always been assumed to be a two-phase structure, a primary cellar under the western bay of the hall, extended northwards in the post-medieval period – but this has never been demonstrated. Moreover, a brief report of features observed in the cellar walls beneath the hall is difficult to reconcile with the timber-framing above. An 'entrance' was reported in the south wall, in a position that would be inconsistent with the postulated garderobe above, accessed via the outward-opening doorway at the western end of the hall; similarly, the position of a 'blocked light' observed in the western cellar wall is inconsistent with the paired doorways in the gable-end framing above that imply the existence of another building, probably containing service rooms at ground level, directly abutting the west end of the hall block (Thomas 1991b). The answer to these conundrums may be that the part of the cellar that underlies the hall block in fact pre-dates it, and perhaps belonged to one of the documented canonical houses that were demolished, and their properties amalgamated, in the early 14th century. The observation of a relieving arch in the cellar's east wall presents no such difficulties, being consistent with abundant evidence of soft, unstable local ground conditions in the form of slumping visible in the east, west and particularly the south cellar wall, the latter contributing to the distortion of the south wall frame which had settled substantially either side of the central stack. Test-pits excavated through the cellar floor revealed a long history of patched and re-laid floor surfaces, an east–west partition of 16th- or 17th-century date, and footings for posts propping the floor above (Thomas 1991b).

The excavated north building

In 1991, an area excavation to the north of the hall revealed the wall footings of a medieval building lying parallel to the hall, built after the 13th century and demolished probably in the 17th. Its south-west corner and the footings of parts of its west and south walls were revealed, together with another wall alongside and parallel to the

south wall at a distance of 1.6 m from it. All the walls were of clay-bonded sandstone rubble; debris in the overlying demolition layer suggested the building had been timber-framed above its footings, with wattle-and-daub in the panels, and had a stone-tiled roof. Although its plan was incomplete, the parallel walls of its south side were suggestive of an aisle or pentice. Outside it to the west was a cobbled yard surface. The orientation of the building, and the stratigraphy, suggested that it was broadly of the same date as the hall (Thomas 1991a). There was no direct evidence for its function. The excavators' suggestion that it was a detached kitchen block seems entirely plausible in terms of its location across a yard from the hall range (see e.g. Smith 2001), though not enough of it was excavated to show whether it had, for example, an over-sized central hearth or to explain the pentice- or aisle-like structure along its south side. While the possibility that it was an aisled ground-floor hall associated with a chamber block represented by the present hall cannot be completely dismissed, its position across the yard rather than adjoining the latter makes this an unlikely option. The paired and opposed doorways at the western end of the present hall block are also consistent with the 'normal' adjuncts of an open hall.

Nor, it seems, does the dating evidence allow the excavated building to be seen as one of the two canonical houses that were demolished, 'rationalised', in 1328 to create a single new property. The excavated building was contemporaneous with the Building 3 hall – it was not its predecessor. One other, perhaps remoter, possibility can be entertained. The excavated footings are those of an aisled timber-framed building, roughly contemporaneous with the surviving hall: could these be the original footings of the aisled building re-erected close-by as the Cathedral Barn? The archaeological dating seems to be against it – with a post-13th-century origin and 17th-century demolition date – but is not, however, at all precise and may be worthy of re-examination in the future.

Discussion

Documentary, structural and dendrochronological evidence all converge to show that 20 Church Street is a building of the late 1320s. Stylistically, it has features (the ogee-arches to the windows and the crown-post roof) consistent with that period. Dendrochronological dating is consistent with the documentary evidence, indicating a felling date between 1327 and 1371 (Tyers 1996); and in 1328, the Cathedral Chapter decided to replace two small canonical houses in Caboche Lane with one larger building.

As built, the surviving medieval range of 20 Church Street appears

to have consisted of a very large, heated and well-lit chamber at first-floor level over a lower, less well-decorated room on the ground floor. The first-floor room had opposing doorways at its western end: one accessing a projecting oriel of some form, probably containing an external stair, the other possibly leading into a projecting garderobe. Below, the ground-floor room could also have been heated – though this is uncertain; it was lit by windows plainer than those of the room above, and there was a pair of good doorways in its west gable wall.

Given its date and what we understand of its layout, a conventional explanation of this building, based on a wide range of better-understood rural buildings, might be that it was a solar block to a very grand open hall which no longer survives. The main difficulty with this interpretation lies, as discussed above, in the absence of any evidence for such a hall ever having been attached to it. There is no evidence for any large structure attached to the north side and the excavated contemporaneous building discussed above was 10 m to the north across a courtyard. The windows in the south wall preclude there having been one there. The surviving building could not, therefore, have been a typical cross-wing built at right-angles and attached to a hall range. While there is evidence of structures abutting to the west and east, there is again no evidence that these could have included an open hall of sufficient size and grandeur to warrant such a solar block. It is also the case that, while the lower room was certainly plainer than that above, it does not have the appearance of a simple undercroft. Nor is there any evidence that the ground floor was partitioned to form the buttery and pantry typical of a 'low end' cross-wing attached to a hall.

All the available evidence – above-ground and below – points to this having been a first-floor hall. Why a canonical residence should have been designed thus in early 14th-century Hereford is not immediately clear. There are, however, contemporary or near-contemporary parallels in other county towns. In Shrewsbury, in the late 13th and early 14th centuries, the highest status merchants' houses were mostly of this type, with living accommodation over undercrofts. But the latter appear to have been predominantly commercial, and the prevalence of this building type there may owe much to the presence of gradients close to the main streets that made dwellings raised over half-basements an easy form to adopt (Baker 2010b). This building type can also be found somewhat later on a level site elsewhere in Hereford at 2–5 Widemarsh Street (see p. 20), again in a commercial context. More frequently, however, genuine urban first-floor halls in the surrounding shire towns – Bristol,

Gloucester, and Worcester – were characteristic of the later 12th century. Pressure on space ('urban compression') seems unlikely to have been a factor at 20 Church Street given that the containing plot is very large: a ground-floor hall could very easily have been accommodated. Nor is there any evidence of a tradition of first-floor halls amongst Hereford's canonical residences, at least, not in the following century: Harley House and 29 Castle Street (see below), and 3 St John Street (Shoesmith 1998) were all more or less conventional ground-floor halls. Nor, finally, is it the case that 20 Church Street was built in imitation of the episcopal residence. In short, there is no immediately obvious reason why a first-floor hall should have been chosen as a replacement for two smaller, earlier, canonical residences. Nor is there any immediately obvious reason why it was built with an unusual (for Hereford), and asymmetrical, crown-post roof.

How might the complex have functioned? There were almost certainly attached wings at either end. The paired ground-floor doorways in the west gable frame may suggest that the range on that side comprised the main services at ground-floor level; by default, a range at the east end could have been a solar wing. The two opposing first-floor doorways – one from a stair oriel, the other to a probable garderobe – would then have been, *de facto,* at the 'low' (west) end of the hall, perhaps an echo of a screens passage. Whether the complex originally extended to the street frontage, as it did by the mid-16th century when the 'great chamber' was there (see below), is unknown. The excavated building lying north of and parallel to the 14th-century hall, probably separated from it by a cobbled yard, may have been a detached kitchen, but only a fragment of one corner was revealed and most of the medieval strata were deliberately left undisturbed.

In 1397, John Carpenter alias Menysere leased the property on condition that he restored the hall to its original state and modernised it by adding a chamber of two bays, the work having to be completed by 1401: this is probably the cross-wing at the east end of the hall. In 1428 a row of shops was built along the frontage with Church Street, probably on the vacant garden space.

No more evidence is forthcoming until the mid-16th century, when, according to Robert Crowley's inventory, the hall was known as the parlour and was heated; it was separated by two more chambers from the great chamber next to Church Street. Another three chambers, probably in the east wing, cellar and buttery, are listed before the hall, which was heated and was probably the lower hall under the great parlour. In 1717, William Watts rebuilt the wing next to the street. He must have pulled down the great chamber and adjacent rooms to do

so. The east wing, next to the great parlour, was demolished by his successor in 1723 – as recorded in the dated brick used in the rebuilding of the east gable end of the original hall.

(4) Harley Court (Figs 2.18–2.21; Plates 11–13)

Introduction

Harley Court, 5 Harley Close, presently the home of the Headmaster of the Cathedral School and once the home of Alfred Watkins, is another of Hereford's ancient canonical residences. It lies a little to the north-east of the Cathedral Close, accessed from it by a small alleyway and, despite its central position in the city, in a tranquil and sheltered spot, closely reflecting the persisting influence of the canonical plots with their extensive gardens and the exclusion of commercial activities from this quarter of Hereford.

Behind its elegant Georgian facade, the surviving medieval fabric is that of an open hall of two bays with a single two-storey bay beyond. Good dendrochronological dating evidence from the partition frame tie-beam shows that the timber for the medieval hall was felled in the spring of 1431 (Tyers 2015). This date does not feature at all in the historical evidence, repairs documented in 1406 having evidently been to the preceding building on the site. This first appears in a lease in the years between 1263 and 1284; nothing else is known of it though some of the fabric of the stone cellar under the hall may belong to this period.

Figure 2.18 The rear of Harley Court from the north-west, c.1990; the external brick shell of the property largely dates from its radical rebuilding as a pair of generously proportioned houses in the mid-18th century – as suggested by the separate closet towers. The render is presumably later and was not used on the front elevation. The medieval hall is the 2-storey section to the left

The solar in the storeyed east end bay is but a small one, and the sum total of the accommodation represented by the surviving fabric does not add up to a complete canonical residence. Clearly there are parts of the building that have not survived; an inventory of 1639 lists a great parlour and a little parlour, both with a chamber above and both wainscotted, together with a kitchen and a larder. The missing components would most probably have been on the north side of the hall, which was probably lit from the south.

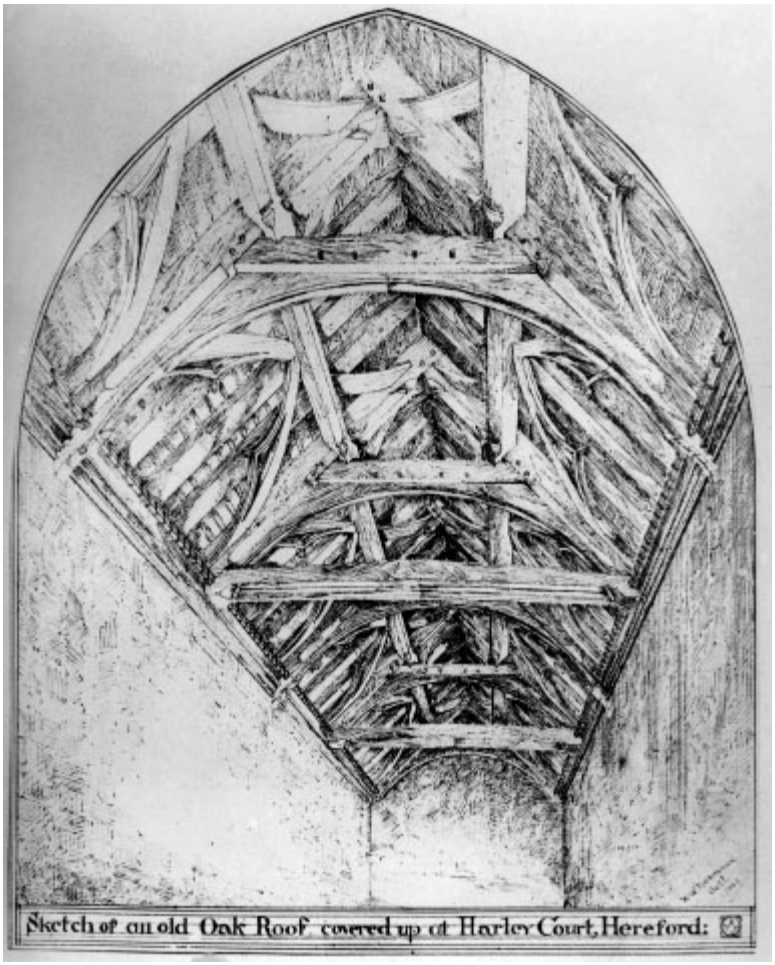


Figure 2.19 Hereford architect W. W. Robinson's sketch of the roof over the medieval hall of Harley Court, made in 1884 after the ceiling was removed; it seems to be based partly on what was there but with a degree of artistic licence

Historical background

Until the 16th century, Harley Court was one of the city's canonical houses; unlike 20 Church Street it was administered by the Dean and Chapter and as such is traceable through the Cathedral archives. It may once have been part of the Deanery garden and the descriptions all seem to be associated with the Deanery. Thus the earliest lease associated with this property was made sometime between 1263 and 1284, for a house described as 'in the corner near houses of the Dean of Hereford' and let to Master Peter de Radenover. This was presumably the predecessor of the present, 15th-century, building. No surviving 13th-century fabric can be identified with certainty, although the stone cellar under the present building may belong to this period (see below) and the RCHM recorded the presence of carved

and moulded stones in the garden in 1934.

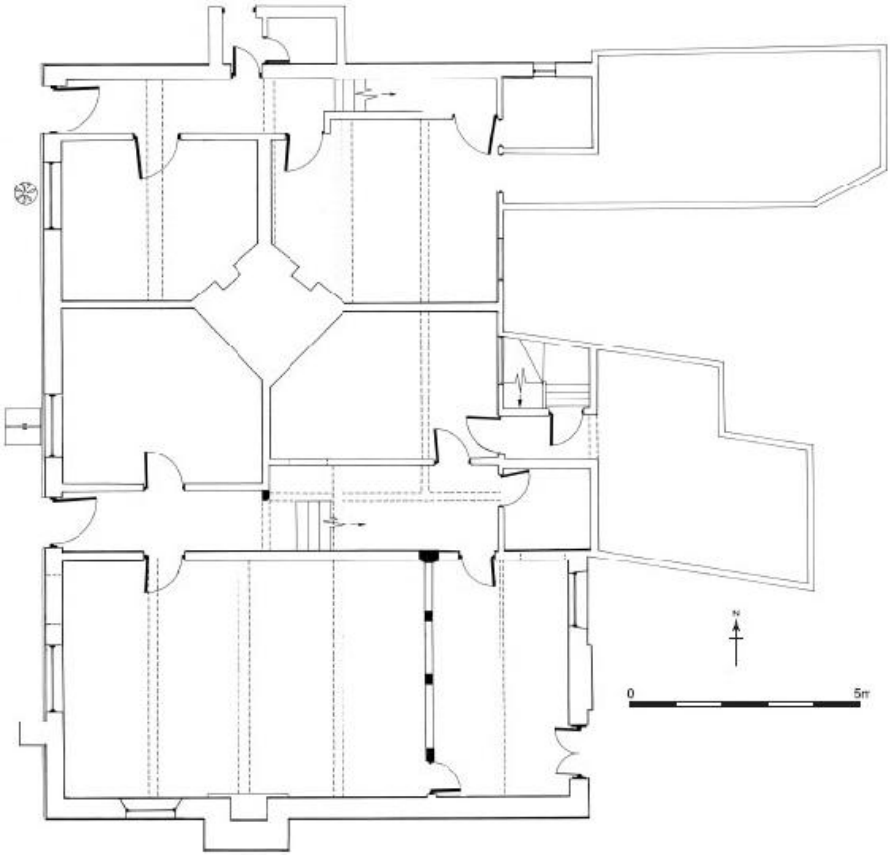


Figure 2.20 The complex ground-floor plan of Harley Court; at the bottom, or south, is the medieval hall with the separate full-width room to its east. To the north, centred on the large diamond-set central stack, are the 18th-century additions

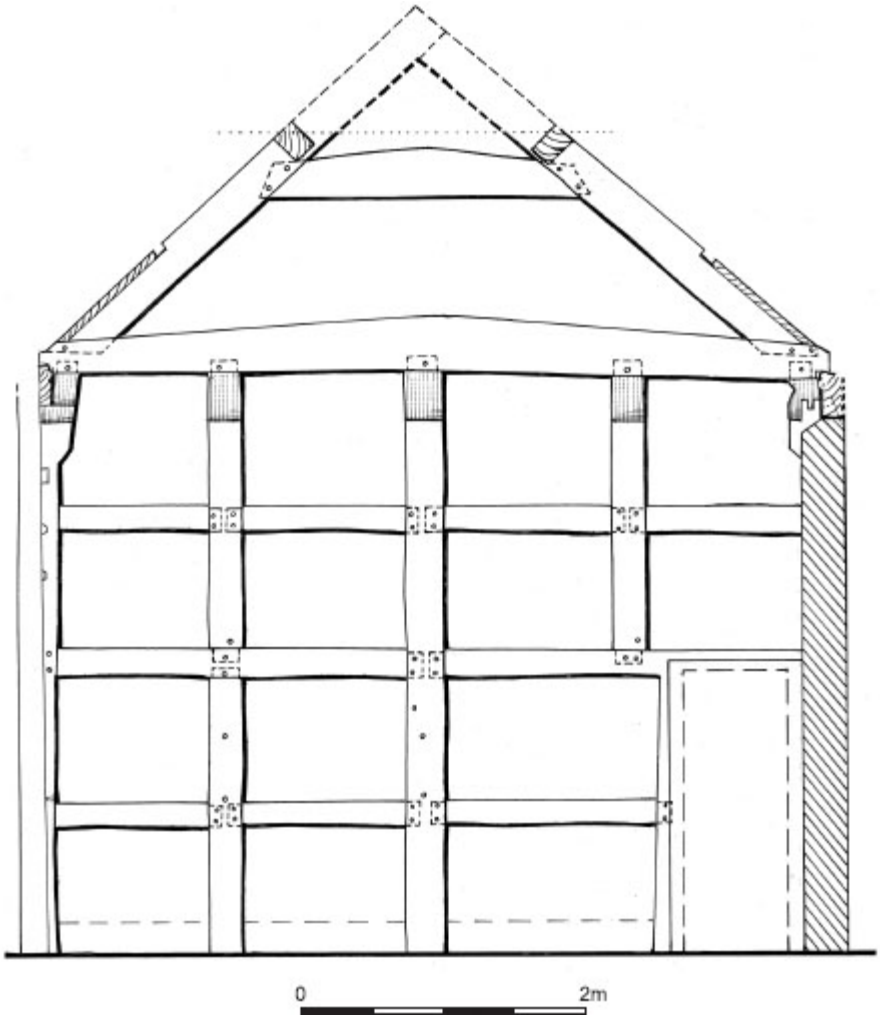


Figure 2.21 The west, or hall, face of the simple cross-frame in the medieval portion of Harley Court; the doorway position at the right-hand end appears to be original though the opening has been remodelled

The records are totally silent during the 14th century. The next document dealing with this property is dated 1406, when a lease was granted to Master John Gatesby, Canon, in consideration of repairs carried out by the said Master John, of the property between the house of the Dean of Hereford, the canonical house of Henry Buyton (Harley House) and the highway called Oldescole Street.[18]

Nothing further is recorded until, in 1512, a lease was made by the Dean and Chapter to Master John Wardroper, one of the residentiary canons, of a house between the Dean's Palace and the house of Master James Bromwich. The house was leased again, to Canon William Edwards, another canon, twelve years later, by which time John Viall

was the occupant. This was 4–5 Harley Court and Master Bromwich's property would have been the house now known as Harley House.[19] Viall's lease, granted in 1515, contained a clause requiring him to repair the house and to supply building materials, except the large timber which would be provided by the Dean and Chapter.[20] His will, probated in 1526, speaks of a 'bedd over the parlour and a coveryng after carpet making'. He had a kitchen presided over by 'Alice of the kichyn' and hangings round the house which he left to Master William Edwards, who was presumably his landlord.[21]

The series of deeds for the property, held in the Cathedral Library, start in 1626.[22] By this date the house was let to a lay tenant, Herbert Westfaling of Hereford, gent., son of the Bishop of Hereford of that name (1585–1602), who sublet it to other tenants. Again the premises are described as between the Deanery and a canonical house (Harley House) confirming the identity of the property. When the lease was renewed to Herbert Westfaling in 1639, Dr Thomas Godwyn had been his tenant but had recently moved out, leaving an inventory of the fixtures that went with the house.[23] This tells us that the great parlour was wainscoted, with fitted benches round the walls, while the little parlour combined wainscot and benches with painted hangings. Were these the same hangings left in the house by John Viall? The hall appears to have been open to the roof with no rooms above but there were chambers over the great and little parlours, both of which were wainscoted. There was a kitchen, larder and cellar and at least some of the windows were glazed at this date.

The Westfaling family continued to lease the house from the Dean and Chapter until the early 18th century, although by that time it was sublet to tenants and had become dilapidated. A Robert Clayton bought the lease in 1725 and his entry fine was adjusted to take account of 'the late great charge Mr Clayton has been at in repairing the house'.[24]

The lease, still of a prestigious building, with a large garden, was later bought by John Georges in 1745. He exploited the site by building a cottage in the grounds and dividing the building into two separate houses. The first phase of the present facade probably dates from this remodelling. The divided house and cottage became 'three Dwelling houses with the Gardens, stable and outhouse and appurtenances near unto a lane called Milk lane'.[25] The footpath which now connects Harley Court with East Street at that time only served the new cottage.

This phrasing of the lease continued until 1810, when a new lease was made out to Thomas Clarke, gent., of Harley Court – the first

mention of this name in the deeds. In the same document a clause appeared requiring the tenant to 'block and stop up with the same materials with which the Wall was built all the Windows of the hereby demised messuage … which are now or ever have been open to the Deanery Garden'. Evidently the then Dean valued his privacy.

For years no action was taken, but by 1836 the lease indicates that the tenant had finally complied. It is likely that this development coincided with the insertion of the large window at the south end of the facade, cut to compensate for the loss of light in the end room, the medieval hall, due to the blocked windows. Meanwhile Peter Hartley, plasterer, developed the plot to the north. Known as Lower Harley Court – the similarity in name seems to be coincidental – it contained the house and workshop, a malthouse or outbuilding and three stables with an adjoining yard or piece of void ground.[26]

A watercolour of Upper Harley Court at about this date shows the two semi-detached houses, with the path curving away to the left and the cottage, workshop and outbuildings in the background.[27] The house is faced with brick, as today, but the parapet and the windows were replaced in the 19th century.

Description

Harley Court, now 4–5 Harley Close, is, outwardly, a large mid-Georgian pair of houses with a brick front and rendered side and rear walls. The main building is of three storeys above a cellar, and, superficially, seems to consist of a large rectangular block under a triple-pile hipped roof with two closet towers at either end of the rear elevation and a massive diamond-set central stack. Timber framing has been seen in the interior of the north side of the house (Shoesmith 2000, 299). Attached to the south side, however, are the remains of a medieval timber-framed hall – screened on the entrance front by a continuation of the brick facade. This range is aligned west–east along the southern boundary of the containing plot, adjoining that of the Dean's house to the south; access to the house is from a lane extending diagonally from the north-east corner of the Close between the Deanery and Harley House. The medieval range is just over 11 m long and about 5.3 m wide, and the wall-plate is a little over 4 m above ground level. The principal surviving feature is the roof, but there is also a cellar beneath the ground floor that is either primary to the medieval hall or possibly earlier. Structurally, the building seems to have been timber-framed of three bays, though most of the surviving evidence comes from the roof rather than the side-frames, which have been rebuilt and any remnants below the wall-plates hidden. There are, however, traces in the moulded wall-plates of pegged mortices for

the vertical members of the original side-frames; there are just three on the north side but five on the south – a pattern that could suggest one side had windows.

An open hall occupies the two western bays, separated from the two-storeyed eastern bay by a surviving primary, full-height, timber-framed partition with an original doorway position at its southern end. The framing is quite simple, four panels wide and high, with the stud forming the inward jamb of the doorway offset for that purpose. The bay posts have gun-stock jowls (see *Glossary*). The joints are fully housed mortice and tenons, double pegged at the end of horizontal timbers and single pegged in the verticals. There is evidence of knife-cut carpenters' marks across the joints on the west face. The tops of the verticals were chopped back slightly when the loft floor or ceiling was added.

The hall is about 8 m long and 5.3 m wide and, following a major restoration in the 20th century, is again open to the two bays of the original roof structure. The central truss over the hall has a tie-beam, probably originally supported by curving braces from the bay posts that have since been removed. The main bays in the roof are subdivided by intermediate trusses with cambered collars, with no braces above them. The collars were originally supported by arch-braces which sprang from the side walls below the level of the wall-plates.

The infilled truss forming the top of the cross-frame has a collar supported by three queen struts. Its tie beam is neither chamfered nor supported by braces; instead there is decorative paintwork – mainly of floral patterns – on the west side of the truss and this is also in evidence on the main roof timbers.

The trusses support a single tier of butt purlins with bar-stopped chamfers. The purlins and the ridge-piece are both stiffened by long wind-braces with single pierced cusps, but it is unclear how many original rafters survive because they are hidden by a lath-and-plaster ceiling. Sections of bratticed or castellated wall-plate, possibly re-set, survive on the north side of the hall and traces of painted decoration, including vine-scrolling, survive on some of the roof timbers (Plate 13).

Much of the roof is still hidden, but an 1884 sketch by local architect W. W. Robinson shows it as it was then, when restoration work was being carried out at the house. According to this drawing the roof had a single tier of clasped, moulded purlins and no ridge – and continued over the eastern bay. The purlins were supported by cusped wind-braces with pierced spandrels rising from the bases of the

principals, as well as by down-swinging plain wind-braces from near to their tops. There were three common rafters to each bay, and the wall-plates were bratticed/castellated. Unfortunately, the reconstruction seems to be unreliable.

There are no surviving indications to show how the hall was heated or lit – though it may be of some significance that the present, relatively-recent, external stack in the south wall would have been central to the two-bay hall and may thus have replaced an earlier stack. Alternatively, there could have been a central open hearth – although the clean condition of the roof timbers makes this less likely. The underside of the wooden floor is covered over, so it is not possible to see whether its central section has indications of having been strengthened to take a central hearth.

The eastern bay always seems to have been of two storeys and was accessed by the primary ground-floor doorway through the southern end of the cross-frame, the off-set position (to leave room for a dais) being consistent with this being the high end of the building. The visible wall-plate in this section has a simple moulding with the same off-centre cut stop to the chamfer as seen in the hall section. The moulding of the bay post respects the present first floor. Most of the rest of the structural evidence of the medieval period is lost or covered.

There is a stone-built cellar beneath the hall, with an ashlar front (west) wall and south and east walls of rubble; its north wall has been replaced with timber framing of the same character as that which can be seen in association with the diagonally set stack-base in the later, northern part of the house and cellar. Under the hall there are two openings in the front wall with dressed reveals that appear to course-in with the rest of the wall, and barrel slides built into the sloping floor of each opening; these may be modified original openings. At the junction of the front wall with the missing north wall, one jamb of a doorway survives, chamfered on the outside (to the north), flat on the inside, showing that it held a door opening inwards to the space under the hall; the arch over it has been removed. This doorway could represent either external access at the bottom of a flight of steps, or access into an adjoining basement room, perhaps under a former cross-wing at the west end of the hall. There is a small, crude, single-light window opening with splayed reveals in the back/east wall; it may have had a light-well on the outside, or exterior levels may have risen. A vertical joint in the masonry to its north suggests that it was not the first or only opening in this part of the wall, and it, and a change in the plane of the wall further north, show that there is more

to the structural development of the cellar than is currently understood. Inspection of the cellarage next door may one day offer further information, though it is not at all unlikely that at least some of the cellar fabric belongs to the present hall's 13th-century predecessor.

Discussion

While the hall is of generous proportions, the decorative carpentry of the roof is not of particularly high quality when compared to other buildings of the period within the city. The angled bar chamfer stops in the roof timbers are very similar to detailing that has been found at Chapel Farm, near Wigmore, and Swan Farm, near Pembridge, buildings also dated to the early 15th century (James 2008).

The room identified as the solar within the surviving two-storey section was small in comparison with the hall. This, and the 1639 inventory enumeration of a great and a little parlour, each with a room above, gives weight to the suspicion that there was more to the medieval building than is now apparent. If the hall was lit mainly from the south, and there is no evidence that the present building (or its cellar) ever extended further west, the most logical option is that there are, or were, missing components of the building, notably the service rooms, on the unsurveyed north side of the hall, removed by or incorporated into the later fabric that is present there. The 1639 inventory also suggests that the hall was still, at that date, open from floor to roof without an inserted first floor.

Clearly in poor condition by the early 18th century, the property was radically remodelled and sub-divided, probably in the 1740s when the present brick facade was added. While the medieval hall was just re-faced in brick, the two large semi-detached Georgian houses alongside it seem to have been virtually built anew. Subsequent changes have been relatively limited, apart from the removal of the ceiling and the exposure and restoration of most of the hall roof, which have allowed, once again, a proper appreciation of its medieval character.

(5) 29 Castle Street (Figs 2.22–2.28; Plate 14)

Introduction

Of the eight medieval buildings discussed in this volume, the majority are externally disguised to the extent that only entry into the property reveals them in their true colours; 29 Castle Street is such a building. Now part of the Cathedral School estate, the medieval hall of the first Vicars' Choral survives substantially intact but is set back behind an unassuming brick-built 18th-century frontage block on the south side of Castle Street, just over 100 m to the east of the cathedral. The medieval hall becomes apparent on entry to a small enclosed yard, where one of its buttressed red sandstone walls is visible – oddly supplemented by a fireplace at first-floor level, hovering bizarrely above the doorway (Plate 14). The only external clue to the presence of a property of unusually high status is visible from Castle Green to the south: a pair of matching gazebos or summer-houses (Fig. 2.22), visible over the low, flat roof of a modern classroom block, that were built in each corner at the bottom of a very large garden; early maps, such as Taylor's map of 1757 (Fig. 1.4), show this to have been the grandest, widest, plot on this side of the street.

Within the building, above an inserted first floor, is an exceptionally fine roof of nine narrow bays with arch-braced collars, cusped windbraces and what appears to have been an original smoke louvre; the timbers themselves show signs of smoke blackening, confirming that this was indeed a traditional open hall with a central hearth. Dendrochronological evidence from six cores, mainly taken from the principal rafters, shows that the timber for the roof – which had been thought to be of late 14th- or early 15th-century date, was felled sometime after 1419 (Tyers 2015).

Historical background

The house at 29 Castle Street that became the first home of the Vicars' Choral was given to them in 1336 by a fellow cleric, Roger de Breyton, who gave to 'the dean and chapter of the church of St Ethelbert, Hereford, a messuage in Castle Street, Hereford, for a habitation for the vicars and clerks of the church'. This was an existing property with a hall, chambers, and, apparently, a water supply, as a charter of 1375 refers to one of the vicars living in the 'cistern chamber' and receiving meals in the common hall (Hughes 2016, 123). When, in the 1470s, the Custos and Vicars' Choral relinquished this residence in Castle Street in favour of their newly built

accommodation on the east side of the Bishop's Palace garden, the old premises, known as the 'Old College', were leased out as a dwelling house. From the late 16th century, these transactions are recorded in their Act Book, and the first of these, dated 1578, concerns a lease made to Catherine Darnell of 'ye house and garden in ye castle Streete … called the Old College and 2 other little houses adjoining the same on the west side'. We know that this property was, at the time, set back from the street because Mrs Darnell was to 'well and sufficiently and townlike build a forefront upon the old building from the hall doore or porch of the said college unto a back yate upon the East side of the said old Colledge within the term of 7 years next coming'.[28] It can therefore be deduced that the original building was not 'townlike'.

More than 70 years later the property is once again described when it was leased to Nicholas Philpotts and his wife: 'ye Old College wherein the sd Nicholas Philpotts now dwelleth … together with the stable, gatehouse and buildings … as also a small building used by ye sd Nicholas Philpotts for a coal house and piggscott'. The property was bounded by the dwelling house and garden of Mary Manfield, together with those of John Abrahall and Richard Squirry, a lane leading from Castle Street to the castle and a waste ground called Castle Ditch. In addition Philpotts leased a building used as a stable which had previously been dovehouses, next to the River Wye.[29]

Taken together these two leases tell quite a lot about the state of the Old College. In the first place it was set back from the road, with space to build along the street line. It also looks as though the service wing had been pulled down and the cross-passage to the hall, with a porch at one end and a back door at the other, abutted the open space left by the demolition. It was presumably this street range, put up around 1600 by Catherine Darnell, which contained the gate house mentioned in Philpotts' lease. The lease adds two extra pieces of information: the juxtaposition of the lane leading to the castle and the position of the dove houses, most probably those that supplied the table of the Vicars' Choral. The 'lane leading to the castle' may have been the present Quay Street, running off Castle Street to the west. Although Taylor's map of 1757 is not to be trusted in detail for back-plot arrangements and boundaries, he does show the adjoining property to the west to have been 'cranked' or L-shaped, with a main parcel running south from the Castle Street frontage but with an adjunct extending west to the lane, with what may have been service ranges on it. A similar adjunct appears next door, off the bottom end of the Old College plot, and could be interpreted as having been part of it.

The Philpotts family sublet the house to Griffith Reignolds, Mayor of Hereford in 1685, and, after his death Mrs Elizabeth Reignolds rented the house to Francis Bridges.[30] An inventory was made of the fixtures prior to this undertaking, providing more evidence of the appearance and accommodation of the building.[31] Altogether there are sixteen rooms mentioned. They are, in the order of listing: the larder, brewhouse, scullery, inner court, kitchen, buttery, little parlour and closet, inner hall, hall, study next to the street, room over the study, study over the great parlour & closet, gallery, best chamber & closet, room over great parlour, closet, meal chamber, kitchen chamber, and at least two cellars. The first five of these rooms, with the meal chamber and the kitchen chamber, which appear as afterthoughts, were probably grouped round or near the Inner Court, which comes between the scullery and the kitchen in the list above. At least five are likely to have been on the upper floor: the study over the great parlour, the kitchen chamber, the best chamber, the room over the best parlour and the room over the study. The inner hall, little parlour, kitchen and kitchen chamber had hearths and there was a 'Landskip' (landscape painting) over the parlour hearth and a picture over the chimney piece in the kitchen chamber. There is no indication as to the function of the gallery, although since it housed part of a great press, it must have been more than a passageway. Fixed benches round the hall may have been medieval. At this date it is evident that the Old College was, or had become, a sizable house, although there is no evidence as to how much it incorporated of the medieval structure.

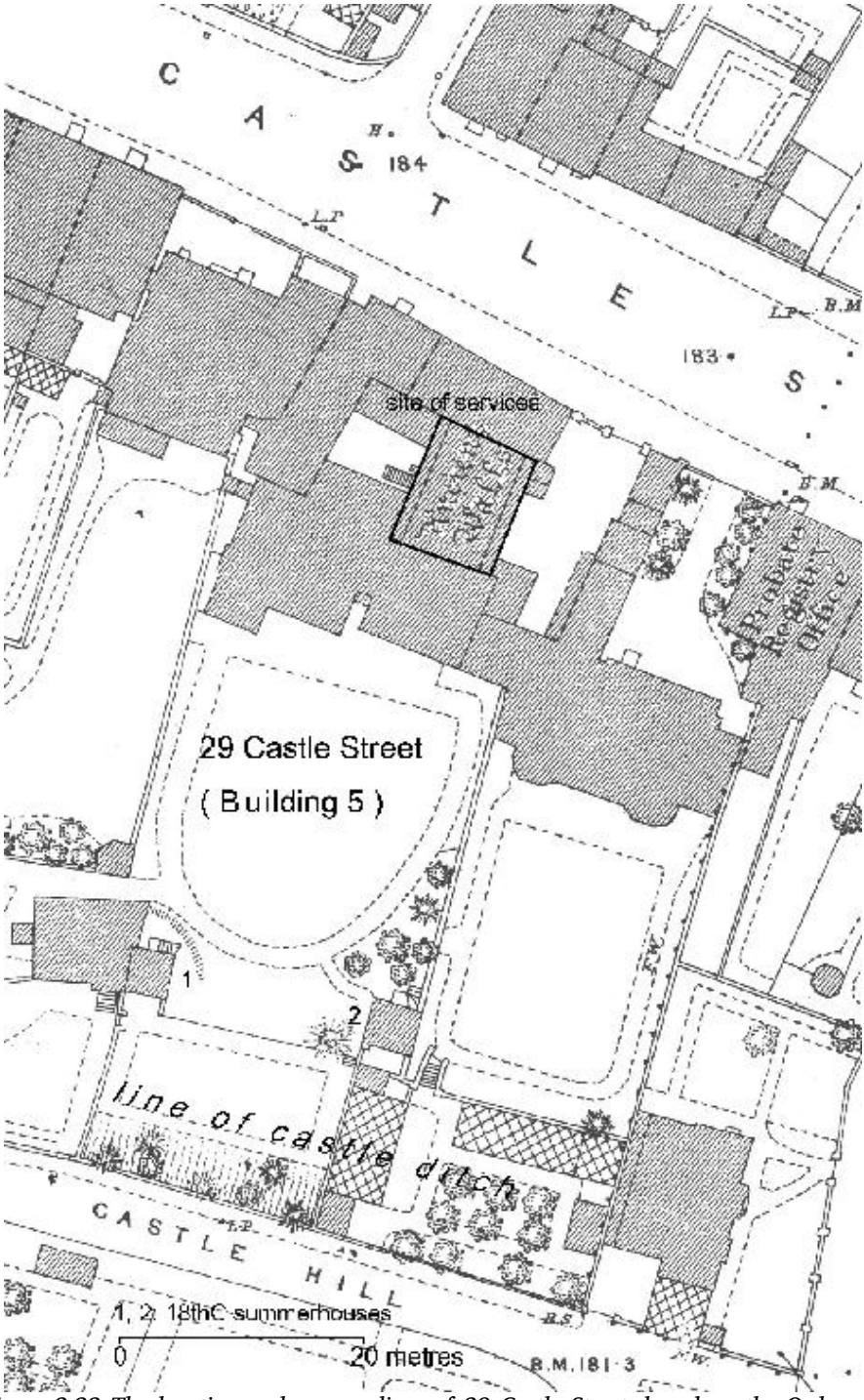


Figure 2.22 The location and surroundings of 29 Castle Street, based on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1886. The stone walls of the hall are shown with the legend 'Ancient Walls' in Gothic script

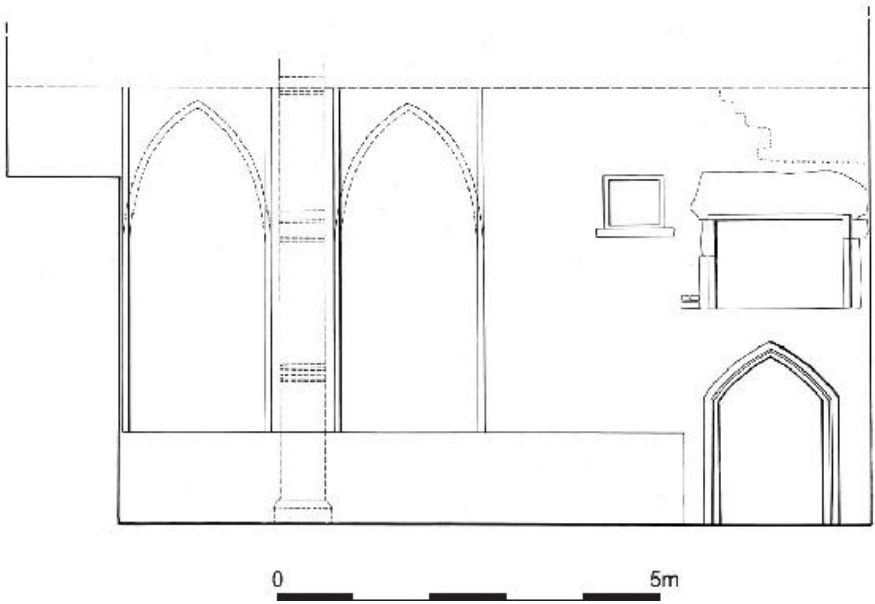


Figure 2.23 Outline reconstruction of the east elevation of the hall of 29 Castle Street, superimposed on existing features, including the now-isolated 17th-century fireplace belonging to the first floor of a building, since demolished, abutting the entrance to the screens passage, right, that was added against the hall

During the 18th century a succession of tenants paid rent to the Vicars' Choral, but many of them do not seem to have lived there. In fact, by 1787 it was described as 'now altered into various tenements Gardens, Stables etc.', while the rent roll for 1806 gives Mrs Fallows as paying for three houses.[32] The house continued to be let to tenants throughout the 19th century. The building is currently used by the Cathedral School.

Description

Despite the radical redevelopment of the rest of the site, the early to mid-15th-century hall survives. Unusually for a surviving Hereford building of this date, it was built of stone rather than timber framing; this may reflect its institutional origin as its post-1419 date shows that it was purpose-built for the Vicars' Choral well before their move to a new building within the Cathedral Close in 1472–75. Strictly speaking therefore, it lies outside the remit of this volume, though its scale and its planning in relation to the frontage are closely comparable to its secular, domestic equivalents (Fig. 4.1) and make it difficult to ignore in a city where well-studied medieval survivals are so rare.

The hall was built at right-angles to the street and set back approximately 5.3 m from it, the intervening frontage block being a mid-Georgian brick building. The hall, which is just over 10 m long and 6.7 m wide, is built of well-coursed red sandstone ashlar; the west and east side walls survive more or less intact. It is possible that the south gable wall is also original but the amount of the north gable wall that remains is more difficult to establish. Only short sections of the side walls are still external, due to later structures butting against them. A fireplace, in an apparently odd position in the external wall-face above the main entrance, formerly served a first-floor room in an abutting range, since demolished (Fig. 2.23).

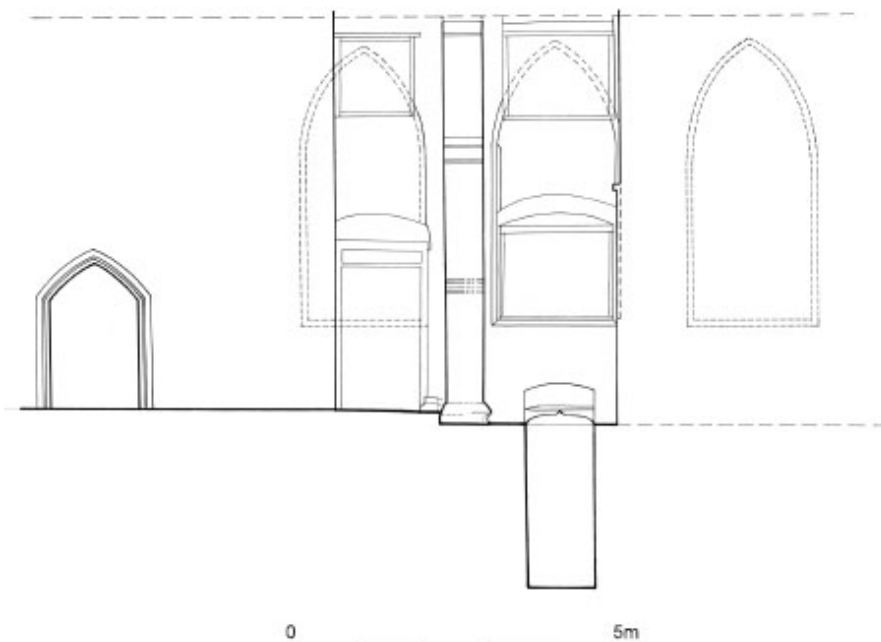


Figure 2.24 Outline reconstruction of the west elevation of 29 Castle Street superimposed on existing openings; the screens passage doorway is to the left; the undercroft implied by the four-centred door arch (bottom) remains unexplored

The doorway, towards the north end of the east wall, seems to be primary and has a flattish two-centred head and mouldings including a sunk chamfer and wave mould (see *Glossary*). The internal rebate indicates that the door opened inwards, unlike the modern pair of doors, and there is a taller and flatter two-centred rear-arch over the reveal. On the opposite side of the building is a matching, but blocked, doorway – the two presumably leading into the screens passage of the hall and suggesting that its 'low' end was at the north

(street) end.

To the south of the doorway on the east elevation are two large windows on both ground and first-floor levels, apparently sharing the openings of two much earlier full-height windows. The stone jambs have cavetto mouldings but continue vertically to the eaves. It is possible that the upper sections have been remodelled and that the jambs do reflect a genuine pair of primary medieval windows, possibly with a buttress between them that has been cut back. In the west wall there are much clearer traces of two large full-height primary windows, with simply moulded sills, jambs and fairly acute two-centred heads whose apexes would have been just below the wall top. Both openings have been infilled in brick and new openings added into their blockings. Their outer mouldings match those of the doorways. Remains of their splayed reveals are visible within the building. They are separated by a full-height stepped buttress of three stages with moulded weatherings and it is possible that there was a third window further to the south.

The survey drawing of the exterior of the west wall (Fig. 2.24) shows, at the base of the wall towards the south end, the top of a doorway with a four-centred arched head. This must relate to an undercroft, but nothing was seen of this when the building was re-visited.

Figure 2.25 Detail of the cusping in the roof of the hall of 29 Castle Street; note the peg

holes and applied strips of timber at the base of the truss collar, evidence for the missing arch-braces. The decoration in the wind-braces is more refined that in the truss

An inserted first floor has obscured the original design of the once open hall, as do the present divisions at ground and first-floor level. However, above the first-floor ceiling, the roof structure is relatively intact despite the removal of its original arch-braces to allow more headroom when the first floor and its ceiling were inserted. The roof is of nine narrow bays. There is some evidence of smoke-blackening – and even some burning – in the southern part of the roof. It is possible that this portion of the roof has been repaired.

Each of the intermediate trusses now consists solely of principals, a collar, and a pair of raking struts from the collar to the principals. There is, however, clear evidence that the collars were supported by arch-bracing. Long, pegged mortices in their soffits have been deliberately obscured by applied mouldings, but are clearly primary and presumably associated with arch bracing. The raking struts are cusped on both sides but the principals are not; this would have created rather odd foils in the heads of each truss.

The main decorative emphasis was on the wind-bracing of the lower tier of the wind-braces and the primary ridge-piece; it seems that the upper tier of purlins – in the middle 'row' of the roof decoration – was not braced, although there are small mortices in the sides of the principals which could have been for some decorative feature. The purlins are moulded and designed to appear to be butted between the trusses, but are in fact made up of longer timbers.

Many of the wind-braces have been removed, leaving oddities in the overall pattern, but the original design is fairly clear. The wind-braces have one large cusp, with a foliated tip, flanked by a lesser plain cusp on either side, creating heptafoil patterns in each panel of the roof structure; the spandrels of the cusps are open. The only apparently primary exception to this pattern occurs in the central bay where there is an additional tier of purlins just above the upper set, the gap between being infilled with decorative carpentry. It seems likely that this was the position of the smoke louvre above the original open hearth on the ground floor. Curiously, perhaps, there are still wind braces rising to the position of the non-existent ridge-piece; this may have been simply to complete the decorative pattern, or be the result of a later modification. The decoration between the louvre and upper purlins is different on either side – with quatrefoils on one side and castellation on the other; this too may be the result of a much later alteration. Most of the common rafters appear to be primary and of virtually square section; there are two of these to each bay in the

roof structure.

It would have been a well-lit hall, with at least two or three windows on the west side and possibly two on the east, heated by an open hearth, possibly with fixed benches around the walls. There are no obvious traces of any other buildings associated with the hall in its primary phase. However, the layout of the hall indicates that its low end abutted the street range which then, by implication, would have contained the services. The high end to the south would have abutted a solar block in a conventional layout, but, clearly, with no other surviving buildings, it is impossible to come to any more specific conclusions as to the original plan-form: given its use by the Vicars' Choral and the requirement for the lodging of a number of individual vicars rather than a single household (the new Vicars' Choral building of 1472 contained 27 individual suites of rooms), the planning of the site around the hall could have eventually differed considerably from that of a 'normal' urban plot.

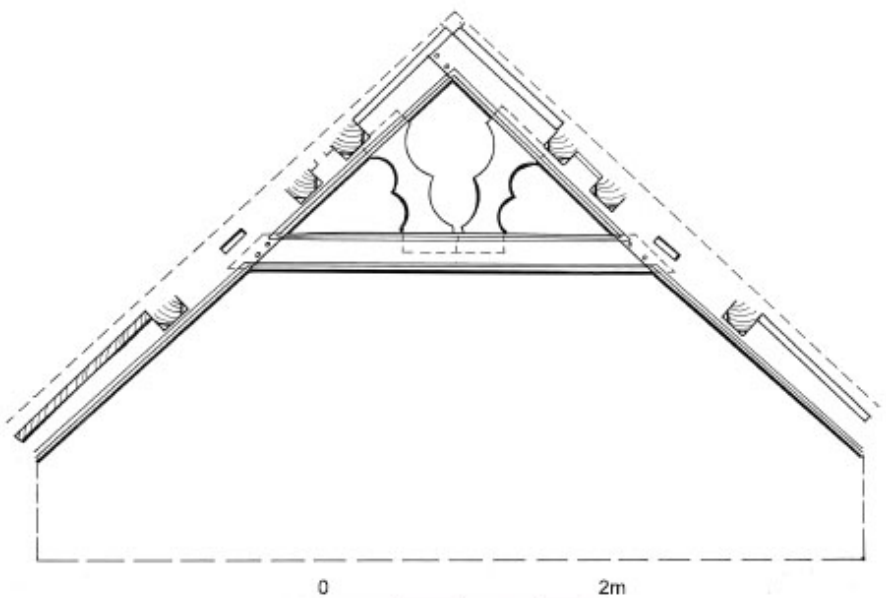


Figure 2.26 One of the roof trusses of 29 Castle Street in its present position above an inserted floor (dashed line); the peg holes and mortices for the missing arch-braces beneath the collar are hidden by added slips of timber

Figure 2.27 Detail of the cusped wind-braces and moulded purlins in the roof of 29 Castle Street; the tips of the lower cusps in this view – the central cusps in the overall cinquefoil pattern – have been cut off and probably had decorative fleurons originally

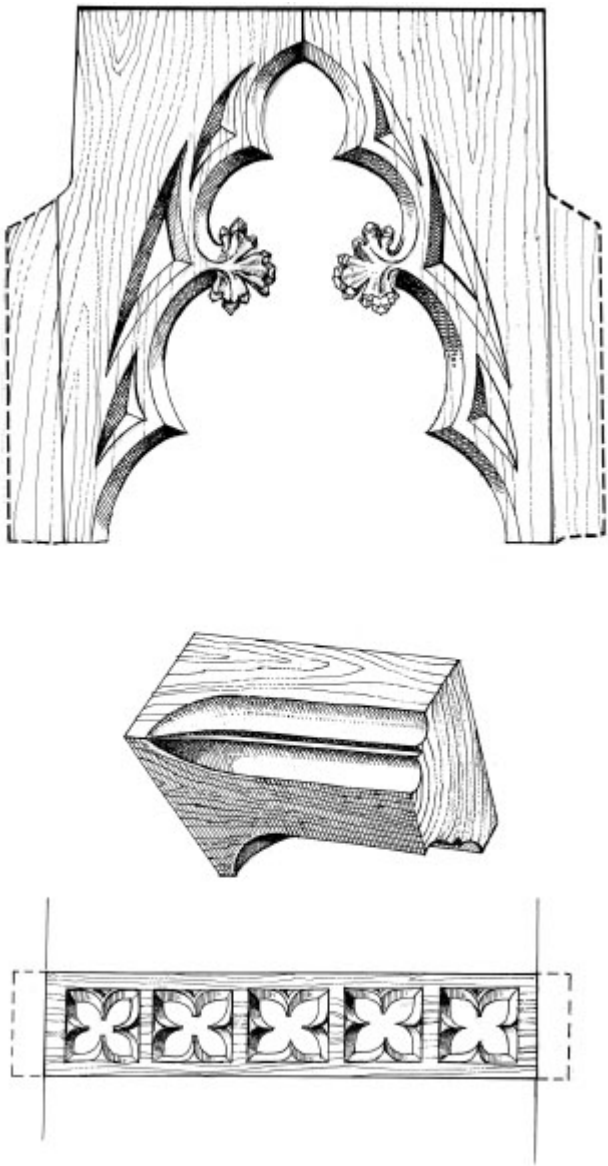


Figure 2.28 An artist's interpretation of some of the delicate roof carpentry in the hall roof of 29 Castle Street, the old Vicars' Choral – (top) wind-braces, (bottom) end of a purlin, middle, and quatrefoil frieze

In the post-medieval period the hall was sub-divided horizontally by the insertion of a first floor. This may have occurred in two stages but the evidence for this is difficult to see. Certainly, at the north end of the hall a large stack was added that would have blocked the screens passage, and this seems to have been built in about the 16th century. At around the same time, or perhaps a little later, a timber-

framed range was added to the west of the hall, but this has not been examined in any detail. The property was again re-ordered in the early 18th century – the probable date of the frontage range to the street, the main stairs within, and the pair of brick summer-houses at the corners of the rear garden.

Discussion

The hall of the former Vicars' Choral may have been built specifically for the College but, on purely stylistic grounds, it could almost have been a typical, though clearly wealthy, domestic building. Its size and position are consistent with a wealthy domestic dwelling on an urban plot and it may be that the chamber block attached to the hall when it was donated to the Vicars' Choral in 1336 still stood when the hall itself was rebuilt in the next century. Although in plan the hall is perhaps unusually long and narrow, with its roof of nine bays, the main difference is not one of size but of materials – specifically the use of masonry instead of timber framing (see Fig. 4.1). The roof of 29 Castle Street is of a similar general style to that of 5 Harley Court and 50a Church Street despite having stone, rather than timber-framed, walls. Some of its decorative features are very similar to examples in the Herefordshire countryside, including, for example, the hall at Chapel Farm, near Wigmore. This is probably of the early 15th century and also has a crenellated fascia or cornice almost identical to that of 50a Commercial Street (James 2008, and see below).

Frustratingly, all the useful and detailed documentation, although it refers back to the 'Old College', deals with the period after the Vicars' Choral had left and when income could be obtained from the rent. It does, however, add some interesting information about the demolition of the range next to the street and about surviving fitments – as well as the sheer size of the property, part of which extended to the Castle Ditch and included dove houses close to the River Wye, and later stables.

(6) 41a Bridge Street (Figs 2.29–2.39; Plate 15)

Introduction

This is another of Hereford's 'hidden' medieval buildings, though in this case it is only hidden in the sense that it is set back behind an 18th-century street frontage, reached through a narrow alleyway alongside a Chinese restaurant and its kitchen in a jettied 16th-century range. No. 41a itself is a small, free-standing, two-storey timber-framed building, now in use as an office. Closer inspection – for

example, of the carved ogee and quatrefoiled door-head in its south wall – reveals that it is of late medieval date, with the exuberantly decorative carpentry that is characteristic of early 15th-century Hereford, and that it was once attached to a further building, to its south, now gone. The structural analysis below shows that it was in fact a cross-wing at one end of an open hall that had been built across the width of a large plot, and was most probably the solar block, with service rooms below a single chamber open to the roof. The building is the only surviving component of a former courtyard plan, a broad, relatively spacious, layout that is, at first sight, inconsistent with the surrounding urban grain (the plot pattern together with the buildings it contains) of this part of Bridge Street – long, narrow burgages that stretch westwards from the frontage back to the city defences (see also the Black Lion, Chapter 3); this relationship will be explored further below. Documentary evidence for the property only survives from the early 18th century but nevertheless reflects aspects of the medieval arrangement. It was then (or was still) a single large property in the hands of the Seaborn family, and an inventory of 1714 shows that amongst a large number of other rooms, the 'Great Hall' still survived and was known by that name, and, by implication, both its cross-wings survived too.

Historical background

Directories, census records and the St Nicholas parish poor rate lists have provided the framework for the assessment of this plot. From these it can be deduced that nos 36, 39, 40 and 41 Bridge Street were, from the beginning of the 19th century, in single ownership, and that they continued to be held together until the end of that century. The four houses are linked by a common frontage which reflects the common ownership and seems to have been built between 1785 and 1790 when the property belonged to the Seaborn family. Fortunately, the records show that the Seaborns retained the property throughout the 18th century and their ownership can be traced without much difficulty through the surviving 18th-century rates lists.[33]

Here, at the beginning of the 18th century, Sarah Seaborn kept a shop: no genteel wool shop like some of her successors, but an ironmonger's which sold, from among a varied stock, bar iron, plough gear, tar and pitch torches, shoe buckles and frying pans. Sarah's inventory, taken in 1714, lists all these items but also itemises the rooms which comprised the premises, allowing the accommodation to be plotted with some certainty.[34] The back yard contained a series of buildings, listed in order. These were the meal room and coal shed, the Great Hall (an unusual medieval survival at this date), and the

brewhouse with cellar under. Only one building with a cellar survives at the back of the site – 41a. This ornate, two-bay timber-framed structure is identified (see below) as a cross-wing, possibly the solar/parlour wing at the north end of a medieval hall. This suggests that Sarah Seaborn's meal room and coal shed were probably the remains of the service wing at the opposite (south) end of the hall.

By 1729 the front range had been subdivided and had become three houses, with the Seaborns in the middle, Elizabeth Cox at 38, and the Clarke family or James Evans in 41.[35] No. 41a would then have become an outbuilding for 41. More than a hundred years later, in 1840, after the passage between 40 and 41 was developed, the poor rate lists suggest that 41a was used temporally as a dwelling before becoming a stable. The major repairs and rebuilding of the premises are likely to fall between these dates.

Description

This small, two-storey, two-bay, timber-framed structure, isolated in the back gardens behind the Bridge Street frontage, is set at right-angles to the street and lies close to the northern boundary of the containing plot. It is just 6.6 m long and 4.8 m wide, with a plain gabled roof. The southern side frame has lost most of its ground-floor timbers, excepting the central bay post and the remains of a ground-floor doorway. This has a decorative head tenoned into the bay post and its eastern jamb. The head has a flat ogival arch with a quatrefoil carved into each half. Other mortices and peg-hole evidence indicates that the doorway was primary and that there was another opening – possibly another doorway – on the other side of the bay post to match. This suggested symmetry is complicated by the potential evidence of another former opening towards the western end and, to the east of the existing doorway, peg-holes that seem to indicate an unusually wide former brace rising from its eastern jamb to the girding beam.

At first-floor level the frame is more intact: each structural bay was subdivided by storey-high studs to form four bays in the overall design. Surviving braces in the west half of the building, and empty mortices in the east, show that the central bays were topped by pairs of cusped braces creating a trefoiled pattern. The outer bays had only one such brace and there is no evidence in the end posts of there being matching braces to complete the trefoil. It seems highly likely that the missing elements of the pattern were finished off by the principal rafters of the end frame of a structurally separate, but allied, hall to the south. If this was of the same width as the length of the cross-wing, and if it was a standard open hall, its wall-plate height may have been about half-way up the first floor of the cross-wing.

This being so, the principal rafters of its north gable could have been cusped, thus completing the bracing pattern in the wing. This would then imply several things: firstly, that there was an open hall to the south; secondly, that this was 6.6 m wide, had a wall-plate height of about 4.1 m, and a roof ridge level with that of the cross-wing; and thirdly, the fact that the bracing pattern was respected by both hall and wing indicates that the two were probably built at the same time. The length of the open hall is not, however, known, though it would clearly have been longer than the space presently available.

At first-floor level in the surviving cross-wing there was a stud partition made up of re-used timbers, some clearly medieval and of high status. Amongst these is a fragment of a once much-longer piece which had a broad, pegged mortice flanked by cusps cut into the soffit – virtually identical to the cusped braces in the south frame. It seems reasonable to suggest that this was one of the principals of the medieval hall, and one of the cusps may have completed part of the trefoil pattern in the surviving building. The existence of another cusp, separated from the first by what is presumably the mortice for a collar, further suggests a whole series of trefoils – or perhaps also quatrefoils – in the upper part of the gable end of the hall. Taking the reconstructed design one stage further, similar trefoils may have existed in the framing all around the wall top of the hall as well, similar to those of the open hall of 50a Commercial Street (see below). Another re-used timber in the same stud partition appears to be a cut-down section of a tie-beam, with a concave-moulded and ovolo-chamfered soffit flanked by large, pegged mortices. It is possible that this was part of one or more intermediate frames in the demolished open hall, presumably topped by a large arch-braced truss.

The north frame of the surviving building lies on the present property boundary. The evidence of its original framing indicates that it probably had no primary openings and was of an unusual pattern. The existing brick-nogged framing is of square panelling with crude junctions to odd straight braces that are clearly later. The primary frame originally consisted of just three horizontal timbers – sole-plate, girding beam and wall-plate – and three verticals: the end posts and the intermediate bay post. The rest of the framing consisted of two pairs of straight braces, one of up-braces from the central bay post to the wall-plate, the other of very long, matching down-braces from high up on the corner posts to the sole-plate on either side of the bay post. Unpegged mortices in the soffit of the wall-plate must have taken the heads of typically thick medieval staves of wattle-and-daub infill panels.

Both gable frames have been rebuilt: that at the east end has an infill timber-frame with members of fairly large scantling; the brick-nogged west frame has much thinner timbers, presumably much later. The east frame appears originally to have consisted of flared jowled corner posts, possibly with two closely set on the first floor and just one on the ground floor, the sole-plate and bridging beam. The west frame was similar but with evenly spaced storey-high studs at each level and, in addition, straight braces rising from the corner posts to the truss tie and other braces, now removed, dropping down from the same posts to the sole-plate.

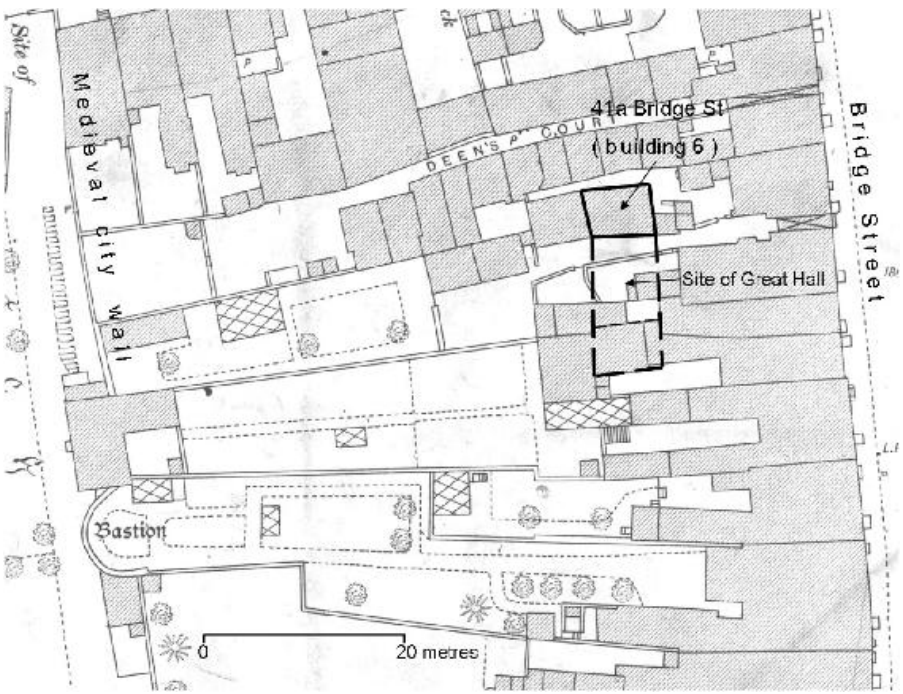


Figure 2.29 Location plan of 41a Bridge Street (Building 6) based on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1886. The standing building and the reconstructed hall footprint both lie across the lines of the long burgage-plot boundaries to the rear (west)

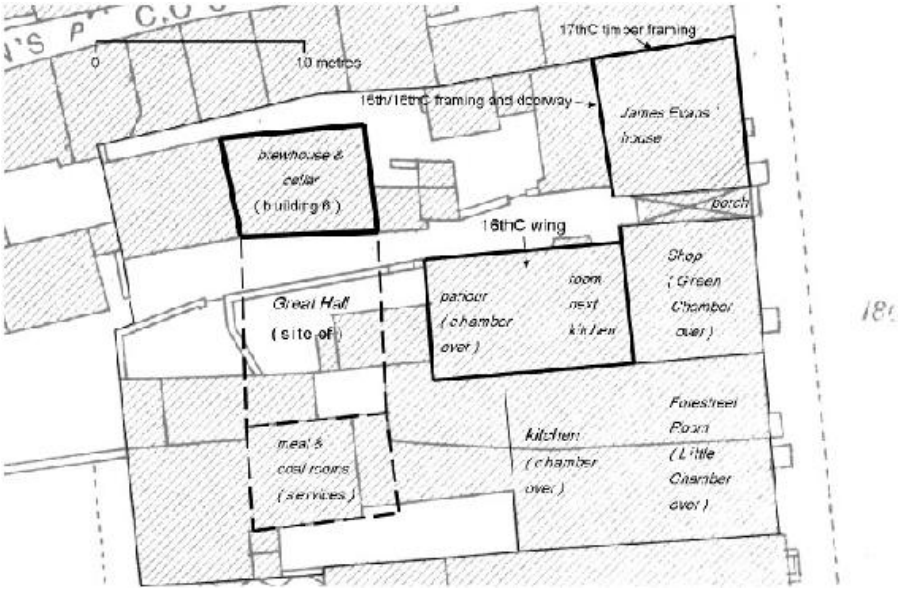


Figure 2.30 Site plan of 41a Bridge Street (Building 6) based on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1886, the archaeological evidence, and Sarah Seaborn's probate inventory of 1714

Figure 2.31 No. 41a Bridge Street from the north-east in the later 1980s, when it was in a very poor state of repair, prior to its restoration. It is now in use as office accommodation

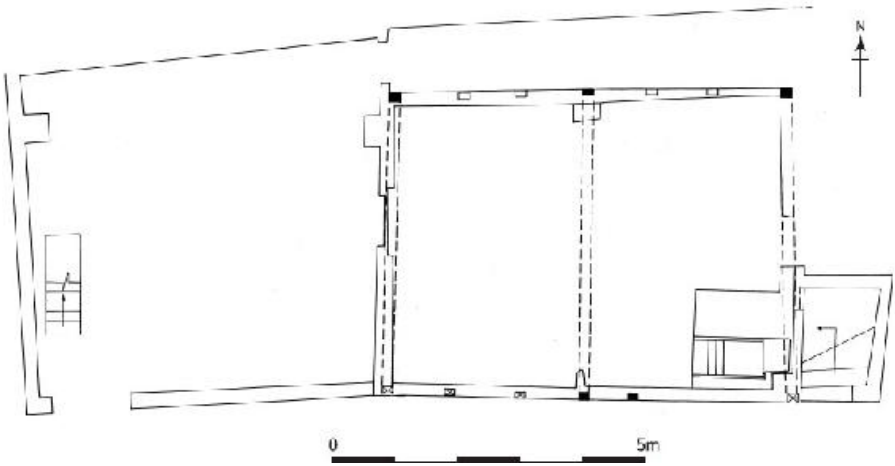


Figure 2.32 Ground-floor plan of the two-bay former cross-wing at 41a Bridge Street

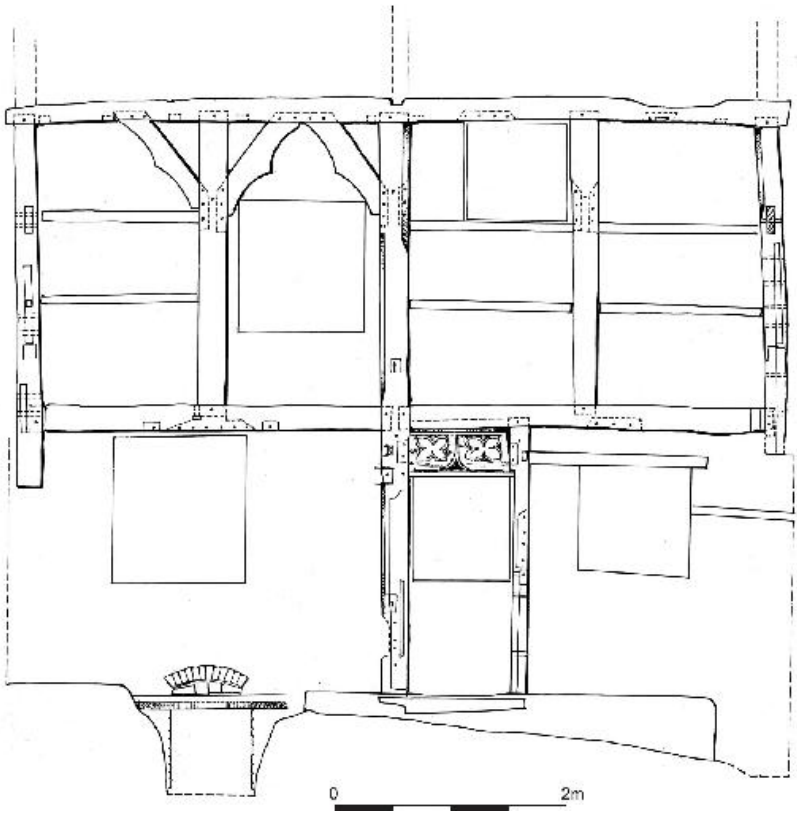


Figure 2.33 No. 41a Bridge Street: the south elevation, as recorded before restoration

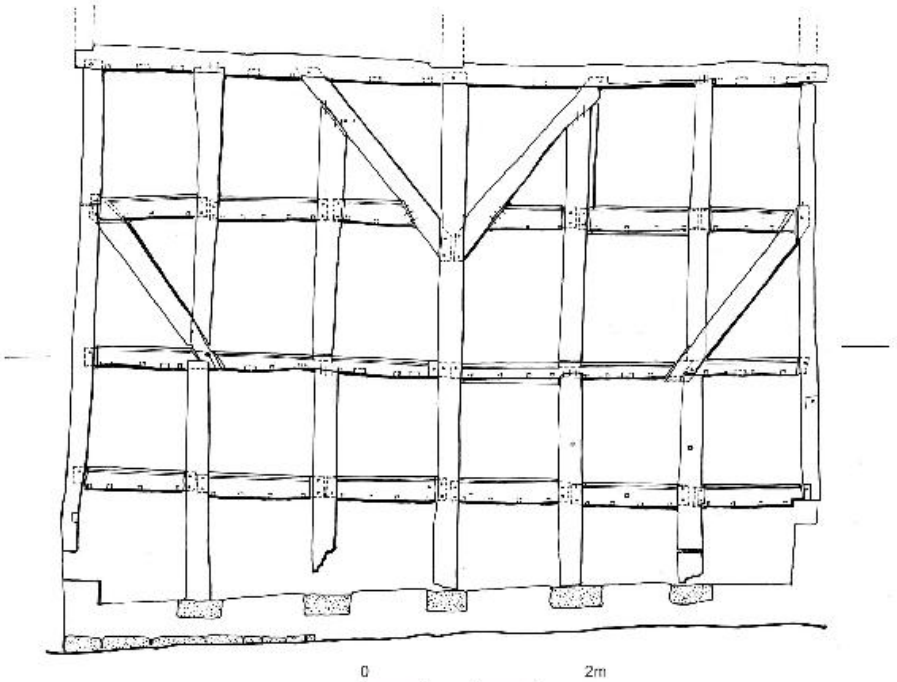


Figure 2.34 No. 41a Bridge Street: the north elevation, as recorded before restoration. The square framing with odd bracing present at this late stage in its history bears little relation to what was first built (compare Fig. 2.35)

The two-bay roof structure survives virtually intact. Each truss consists of a tie-beam, two principals, and a single collar. Unlike the gable-end trusses, the tie-beam of the intermediate truss is slightly cambered. The apex junctions of the east and central trusses are slightly unusual, as they meet at a vertical butt-joint; there is a tenon to support the junction, and a cut into the very top to take the present ridge-piece. The west gable truss is slightly different, with an oversailing apex junction and a hint in the angle of its mortices that the present collar has replaced a pair of 'V-braces' from the tie-beam. The trusses support a single tier of simply chamfered butt-purlins, stiffened by straight wind-braces – two of which have clearly been replaced. Many of the common rafters are pegged to the purlins and appear to be primary, but the ridge-piece is probably a later addition.

Internally there is no indication on the intermediate cross-frame of any primary partitioning of either floor level. There is no jowl in its northern bay-post, but this is probably due to a split in the timber made good; there is a deep split in the surviving jowl of the southern bay post. It is assumed that the windows for the rooms had to be in the gable ends and there is no evidence to suggest how, or if, either

was heated. There is a stone-lined cellar under the building that may be primary but has clearly been altered on more than one occasion.

The building seems to have consisted of single rooms at ground- and first-floor level. The ground floor, oddly, seems to have had three openings, although it is, of course, possible that they were not all contemporary. The doorway with the ogee head looks convincing, as does the assumed one mid-way along the west bay. The opening in-between could have been an internal hatch or window, if it were definitely not a door. Nevertheless, if there were at least two doorways into the ground floor, this would not necessarily fit in with the assumed internal arrangements – unless there were partitions within that have left no trace.

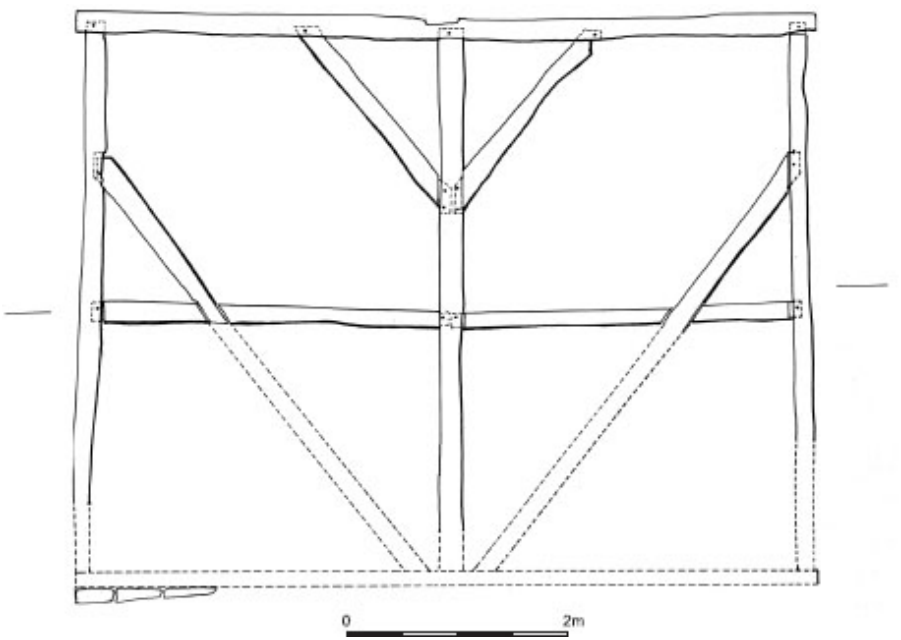


Figure 2.35 No. 41a Bridge Street: the north elevation reconstructed. The original framing of this back wall was insubstantial: apart from the first-floor girding beam and the bay post there were just two pairs of angled braces between the corner posts. It is assumed that the staves of the panel infills must have been relatively substantial

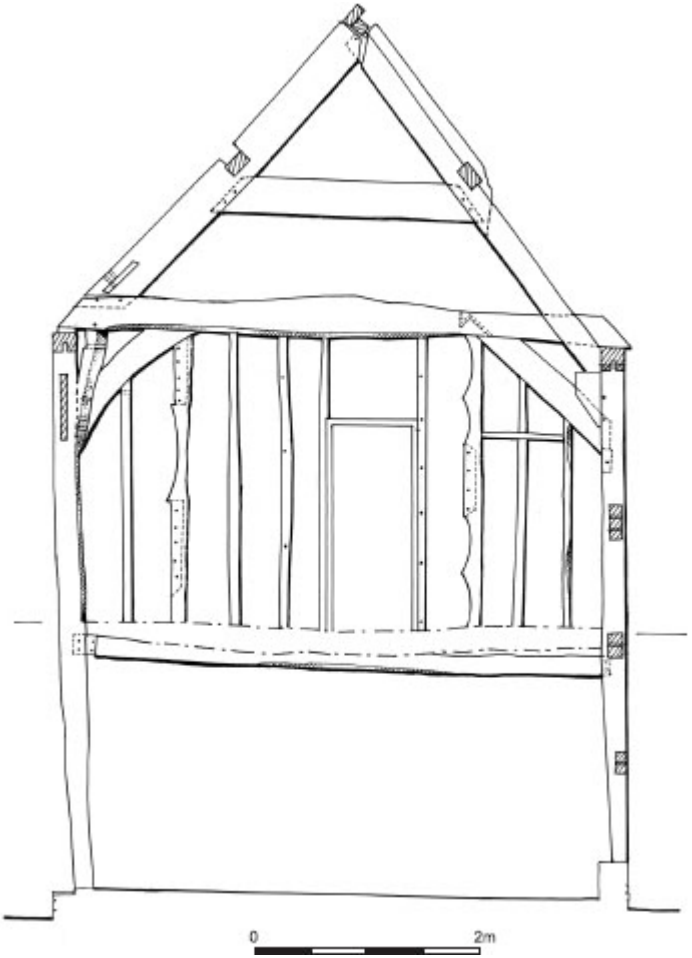


Figure 2.36 The east face of the intermediate frame of 41a Bridge Street prior to restoration; note the lack of any evidence for a primary cross-frame at either floor level. The present first-floor frame incorporates several re-used timbers – including a possible section of tie-beam and a cusped principal rafter from the demolished open hall

The dating evidence includes the ogee head of the doorway in the south frame, the trefoiled pattern of that frame, and the fairly wide framing of the structure as a whole. A date from the late 14th to early 15th century seems likely. Despite the number of possible door openings in the south frame, the lack of partitions within could suggest that this was the solar wing at one end of the great hall, presumably matched by a service wing at the southern, or 'low', end of the hall, in an area now colonised by other buildings.

There is no clear evidence of how the original layout of the house and ancillary buildings worked. There are traces of late medieval timber-framing in the rear (west) wall of the frontage block immediately to the east of the surviving solar. This is one full and one

part bay of a two-storey block that also once continued southwards across the present passageway to 41a. It appears to be of early to mid-16th-century date and may be contemporary with, or earlier than, the long, jettied wing on the south side of the passage that runs from the front block almost to the site of the side-wall of the lost hall (Fig. 2.30).

Discussion

Only a small fragment of the medieval house remains at 41a Bridge Street, set well back from the street, but there is sufficient evidence to indicate that this was part of a much larger dwelling. The available dating evidence suggests a late 14th- to early 15th-century date. Using both the archaeological and historical evidence, the original layout can be postulated: 41a Bridge Street appears to have been of courtyard plan, with its main hall parallel to the street and set back from it. The surviving structure was probably the solar wing at the high end of the hall.

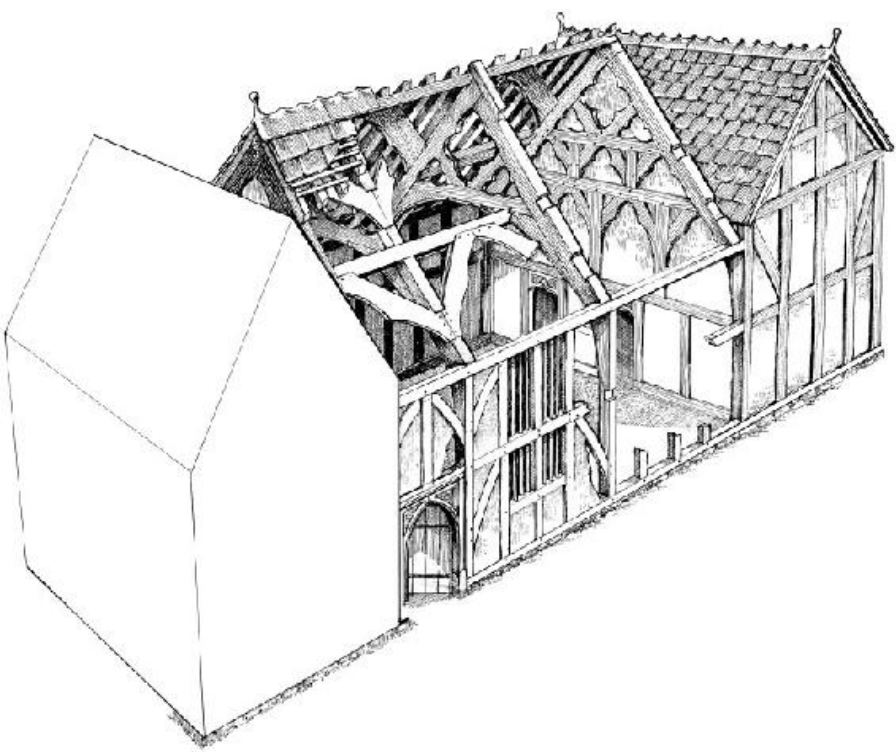


Figure 2.37 A reconstruction of 41a Bridge Street, as seen from the south-east and its probable courtyard (Bryan Byron). The length and design of the open hall is largely conjectural but its junction and relationship with the surviving cross-wing is more firmly

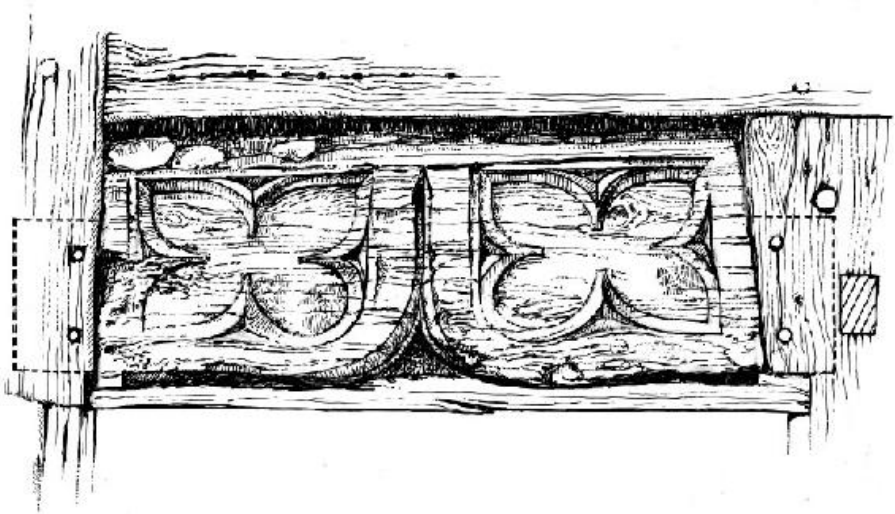


Figure 2.38 Detail of a door head in the south elevation of 41a Bridge Street

Figure 2.39 41a Bridge Street: looking towards the frontage from building 6; the jettied 16th-century wing (foreground) south of the access passage contained a parlour with a chamber above in 1714 (see fig. 2.30)

Such a broad courtyard plan is at odds with the otherwise universally narrow 'grain' of the Bridge Street burgages, at least as they were when first surveyed in the mid-19th century. However, the present frontage building, together with the documentary evidence, clearly demonstrates that there was a wide property here in the single ownership of the Seaborn family in the period 1785–90. Furthermore,

although the frontage was fragmented into different ownerships in 1729, it had earlier, in 1714, been in the hands Sarah Seaborn, at which time the Old Hall still stood, lying across the width of the same broad property. The archaeological evidence of the hall and its associated ranges is also indicative of a wide property in single ownership, *c.*1400.

In this instance, it is the map evidence (Fig. 2.29) which suggests that this broad property with its courtyard-planned buildings of *c.*1400 was perhaps atypical of this side of Bridge Street and was not an example of a whole series of ancient, very wide plots that were sub-divided in the post-medieval period (like those in Pride Hill, Shrewsbury: Baker *et al* 1993). Building 6 lies *across* the line of the long property boundary that emerges from the densely built-up frontage to demarcate the plot tail crossing the open ground at the rear; the reconstructed hall, too, appears to straddle the southern boundary of an older plot. The appearance, from the present landscape and from the 19th-century Ordnance Survey, is that the long-term operation of the property market close to the frontage has confused a simpler pattern of narrow plots that survives with clarity in the less sought-after land at the rear. The plot for the Building 6 hall was probably achieved by the expansionary acquisition of land from the plots on either side. Such acquisitions could, of course, have taken place well before *c.*1400 when Building 6 was built, but might well have taken place for that purpose, perhaps in the context of a depressed post-Black Death property market. Such a development can be paralleled in late medieval Gloucester, where high-status dwellings had been built on newly amalgamated plots by 1455 (Baker and Holt 2006, 72).

Little information is available to discuss the development of the street frontage, beyond the fact that the present 18th-century brick facade hides timber framing of late medieval or 16th-century, and 17th-century date (Figs 2.30, 2.39). In the 16th century, the jettied rear range was built across the back yard, its jetty facing the passage through from the street. Its construction must have rendered the hall immediately less desirable as a room for everyday domestic use and for dining, being now completely overshadowed from the east, which makes the survival of the Great Hall as late as 1714 all the more remarkable. Doubtless the functions of the hall were taken over, with much greater comfort and more daylight on offer, by the parlour and the chamber over it in the end of the 16th-century wing, conveniently served by the kitchen to the south.

(7) 50a Commercial Street (Figs 2.40–2.46)

Introduction

The historical significance of 50a Commercial Street was only recognised when renovations were carried out in the late 1980s, the medieval hall being hidden behind an early Georgian brick frontage. It lies to the north of St Peter's church in the triangular block of narrow properties bounded by Commercial Street, Union Street and St Peter's Street. This triangular block has hitherto been considered to have originated as market-place infill (e.g. Boucher and Thomas 2002, fig. 1.13), but the conventional elongated strip-plot form of the burgages here makes this highly unlikely, at least in the conventional understanding of market-place infill or colonisation, where structures were built (usually at the instigation of the manorial lord) *without* containing plots, yards, or gardens, their own footprint being the whole extent of the property (Baker 2010a, 18; Conzen 1969, 38).

No. 50a Commercial Street is a two-bay medieval hall with an elaborate decorative roof, of which four-fifths has survived later alteration. It is notable for its three tiers of cusped wind-bracing and trefoil-headed framing in the gable ends and long walls below the wall-plates. The hall, which lies perpendicular to the frontage, appears at first sight to have been confined within a very narrow plot of the kind now evident in this part of the street; however, the historical evidence shows unequivocally that, in the 16th century, it was part of a courtyard arrangement within a much broader, wealthy property described as a capital messuage.

The historical background

The history of this property has proved a problem as there are no available title deeds and, until recently, it has been impossible to locate a 'marker' building (in the sense of a landmark recurring in the documentation) sufficiently close. However, a better understanding of 51–56 Commercial Street, until the 17th century a single large holding of unusual shape, has provided a context for the plot to the north containing 50a.[36]

The plot containing nos 51–56 was sold by Harry Chippenham, gent. to the Perle family in 1548 and included a messuage, kitchens, stables and other edifices, buildings, gardens and void ground; it had, unusually, five sides. The property lay in St Thomas Street, now Commercial Street, between the tenements of Thomas and John Hyde; at the rear it reached what is now Union Street and stretched between Thomas Hyde's house and St Peter's church. This places the Hyde property on the north-east. Evidence from 18th- and 19th-century

maps suggests that this Hyde plot was originally another large plot and included nos 49, 50 and 50a. If this is so, it would have formed the plot to the north of 51.[37]

The elaborate roof in 50a argues a high-status building and the Hydes' property was certainly that. An indenture made in 1567 records John Hyde Esq. as selling to Richard Seaborne Esq., 'One capitall messuage and six other messuages in St Peter's between the tenement where Edward Waukyn now dwelleth and St Peter's church'.[38] This implies that in the interval between 1548 and 1567, John Hyde had acquired the 'messuage, kitchens stables and other edifices,' etc. which had belonged to Harry Chippenham, and was selling these along with his own dwelling. The sale deed lists the assets of the property, 'all cupbordes, tables formes benches cofers chests bedsteads Sylings waynscotes glasse lattices hangings of chambers and All Utensiles and howseholde stuffe'. Not content with this enumeration of the fixtures to be sold with the house, Hyde or his purchaser caused a separate, more detailed, inventory of these fixtures to be made and this was filed along with the indenture:

Imprimis in the grete Chamber the hangings of newe worke and a cubborde

In the Chymney Chamber a Beddestede with gyrthes one cofer and the hangings

In the myddell Chamber a beddestede with a testure to the same

A grete cofer with the two lockes a new presse and the hangings

In the Steyer Chamber a Beddestede with cordes a cofer and the hangings

In the Chamber by the Courte a grete cofer with three lockes & covered with lether a table with the formes of wainscot two stoles and the hangings

In the halle a large table with the formes of wainscote & the tressells and the Sylinge of waynscote & the hanginges & a cubborde with two lockes

In the grete parlor a grete table with his frame two formes All the waynescote and the waynscote Round about the same parlor.

In the lytle parlor a table with the frame ii formes one large cubborde with three lockes all of waynscote & the wainscote & hangings about the same

In the buttery a cubborde & three shelves

In the grete Kechyn a new furnasse of brasse and the Shelfes Round about the same.

In the lytle Kechin a grete trowe with a cover the dresser & and the Shelfes aboute

In the larder howse a table with Tressells and Shelfes Round aboute and a grete save covered with heare.

In the Chamber over the larder howse two standing beddes with bordes a Cofer and a counter table

In the Bulting howse a grete Tubbe three trowes & a Bultinge Tubbe

Itm the glasse and the lattice of the hole howse

Ex [amin] per me John Clarke

The wainscot 'Syling' described for the hall may refer to an actual panelled ceiling or, more likely, the installation of wainscot round the walls. What is mainly evident from the inventory, with its emphasis on the wainscot and hangings, and the high quality of its fixtures, is that this was the house of an affluent man and a worthy successor to the original builder of 50a.

Later cartographic evidence shows that the property was gradually subdivided to create the present boundaries – which even resulted in one boundary running lengthways through the surviving medieval structure and adversely impacting on its survival.

Description

The main medieval survival of 50a is the almost intact roof structure that once covered a ground-floor open hall, as well as its western wall-plate and the upper portion of its southern gable frame. Approximately one fifth of the roof has been lost following a former longitudinal division of the property, the roof to the east of the division having been removed. The hall is set back about 6 m from the present street facade and at right-angles to it. It is approximately 5 m long and was originally about 6.3 m wide, thus being wider than it is long. Structurally it is of just two bays, although intermediate trusses in the roof structure give the impression that there are four narrow bays, each less than 1.3 m long.

The surviving portion of the south gable suggests its framing pattern consisted of square panels, five wide and four high. All of the jointing is of double-pegged plain mortice and tenon joints. The surviving timbers have a reasonably comprehensive series of carpenters' marks; all on the inner, north, face. The main interest in the frame is in two surviving pairs of cusped braces from the studs to the truss tie – in the central 'bay' and the one to the west of it – and evidence that this also occurred in the matching bay to the east. There appear to have been no such cusped braces in the westernmost bay nor, probably, in the easternmost bay – and in the former there is no indication of an upper mid-rail, which could suggest that this marked

the position of a primary doorway at first-floor level.

Although the side frames have been removed and replaced in brick, the surviving western wall-plate has in its soffit some visible mortices to indicate that there was a similar design of square framing and trefoil-headed panels in this wall. It seems likely that the bay pattern of the side frames matched the truss pattern of the roof, and that there was thus a continuous pattern of trefoils all around the wall tops of the hall. In addition, bratticed or castellated fascias were applied to the wall-plates, matching the surviving section pegged to the tie-beam of the south truss.

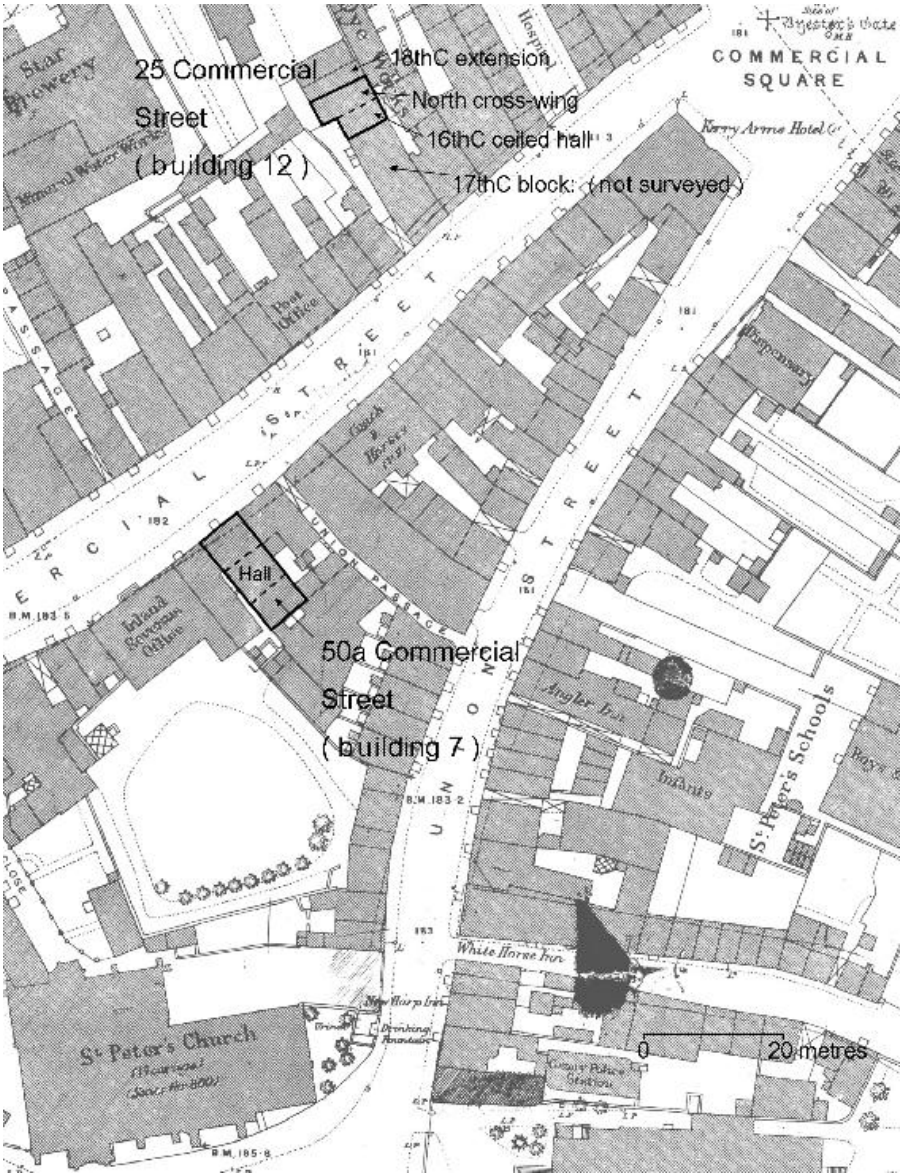


Figure 2.40 Commercial Street: location plan for Buildings 7 and 12, based on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1886. Until the end of the 18th century the street was closed by the Bye Street Gate (top right)

The tie-beam of that truss is also moulded. From the tie, three queen-struts rise to a collar, and from the collar, a pair of raking-struts rise to the principal rafters. These struts are cusped on their upper faces to create an inverted trefoil in the apex of the truss. Rather oddly, no opportunity was taken to cut matching cusps into the soffits of the tops of the principal rafters to create a more elaborate pattern in the apex. The limited surviving timbers of the north gable truss

indicate that it was of the same design.

The intermediate roof trusses are all arch-braced, collar-beam trusses, though most of the arch-braces have been removed. The central truss is of thicker scantling than the intermediate ones, but otherwise their basic design is similar. The evidence suggests that the arch-braces rose from below wall-plate level; as usual, the central portion of the soffit of each ovolo-moulded collar is slightly dropped to take the thrust of the braces. Above the collar, raking-struts rise to the principals. Unlike in the end trusses, the struts are cusped on both sides and the soffits of each principal are cusped as well, creating a central quatrefoil flanked by trefoils in the apex of each truss.

Figure 2.41 No. 50a Commercial Street: the street frontage in 2016

The central truss now has an odd junction with the wall-plate, but this seems to be the result of the under-building of the roof structure in brick. The top of the original frame post, probably a flared jowl, has been retained *in situ* but the rest removed. The shallow remnant of the post has been given additional support by the insertion of a short cantilevered timber. The lesser trusses have simple bird's-mouth unions with the top of the wall-plate.

The trusses support two tiers of wind-braced purlins and a ridge-piece. The purlins have exaggerated, stopped, square chamfers and are designed to appear as if they are butt-jointed between the trusses. In fact they seem to run the entire length of the hall and are thus literally

through-purlins. The ridge-piece is also moulded and appears to be triangular in section, but could not be examined in any greater detail.

The second bay from the north has no ridge-piece and an additional set of purlins. These have similar mouldings to the others but are of lesser scantling and are not wind-braced. They presumably relate to the position of the louvre in the roof, and thus indicate the position of the open hearth on the floor below. Surprisingly, most of the common rafters appear to be primary and are of virtually the same scantling as the intermediate trusses.

The most notable feature of the roof is its almost complete set of wind-braces. There are three tiers of these, supporting the purlins and ridge-piece. Only the lowest tier on the east side is missing. The wind-braces are paired within each bay of the roof. They are chamfered and cusped, with pierced spandrels, and clear evidence of once having had decorative fleurons on the tip of each cusp. They create a trefoil pattern in each compartment of the roof structure to match the assumed trefoils running around the tops of each side of the main framing of the hall. Whilst most have been damaged in some way, only a handful of the fleurons have been removed entirely.

Figure 2.42 The first floor of 50a Commercial Street showing the upper part of its formerly open hall. It has been curiously sub-divided, so that only three-quarters of the width of the hall survives relatively intact

Figure 2.43 Looking up to the underside of the roof of 50a Commercial Street showing the carpentry detailing. In the centre the additional set of thin-scantling purlins are primary and relate to the position of the original smoke louvre of the open hall

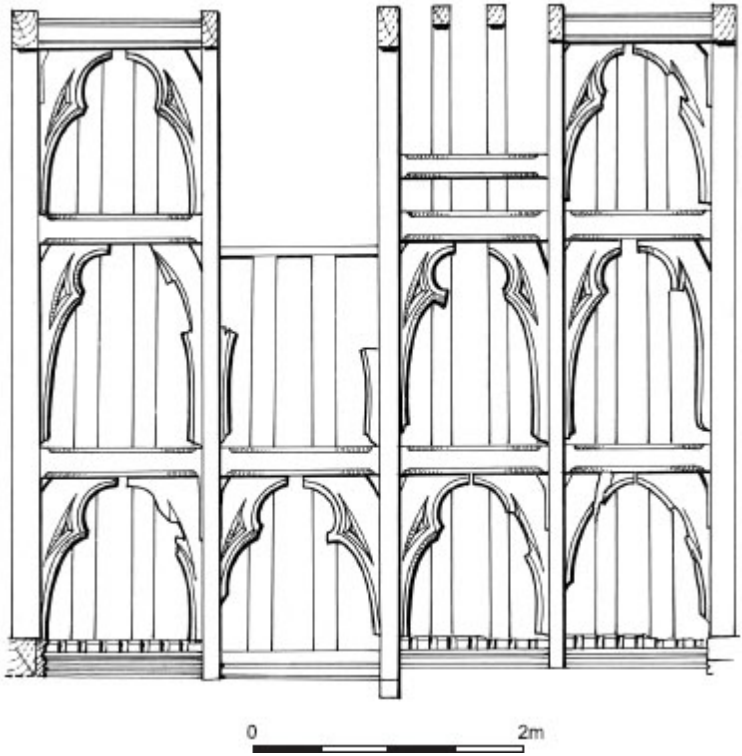


Figure 2.44 Survey of the inside of the intact western roof slope of the hall of 50a Commercial Street. In the second bay from the right is the position of the former smoke louvre, indicated by the additional set of purlins and the absence of a ridge-piece; the other gap in the structure is the result of an inserted dormer window

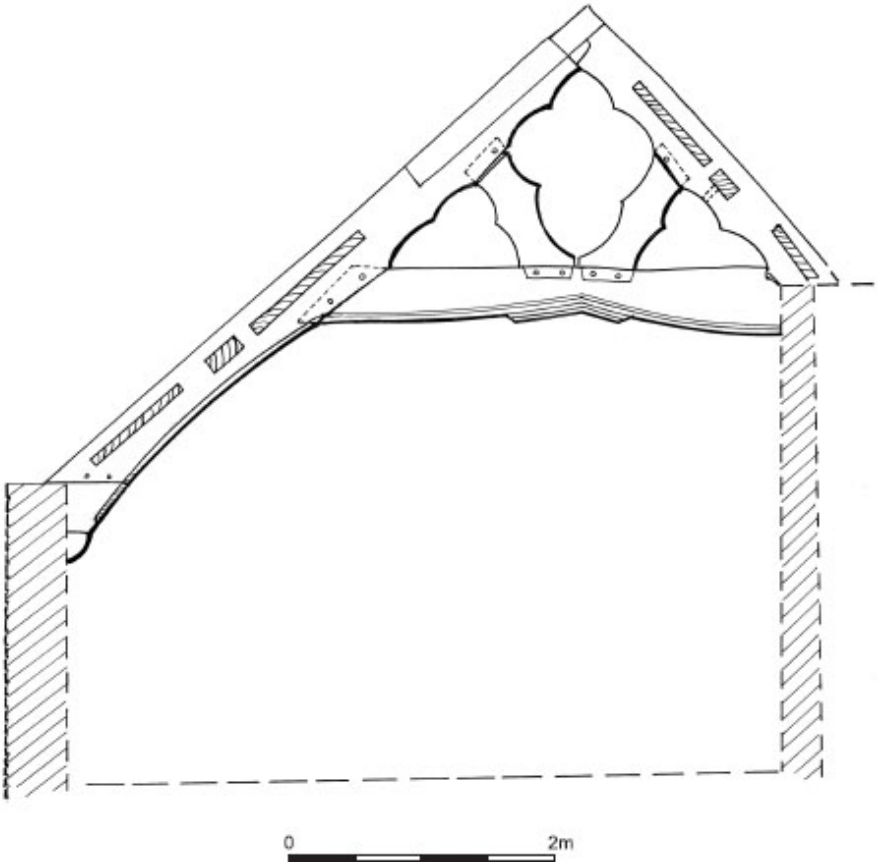


Figure 2.45 South side of an intermediate truss in the roof of 50a Commercial Street showing the curious way the property was sub-divided – and the resultant loss of the eastern quarter of the roof. The down-stand in the soffit of the collar suggests that there were arch-braces originally

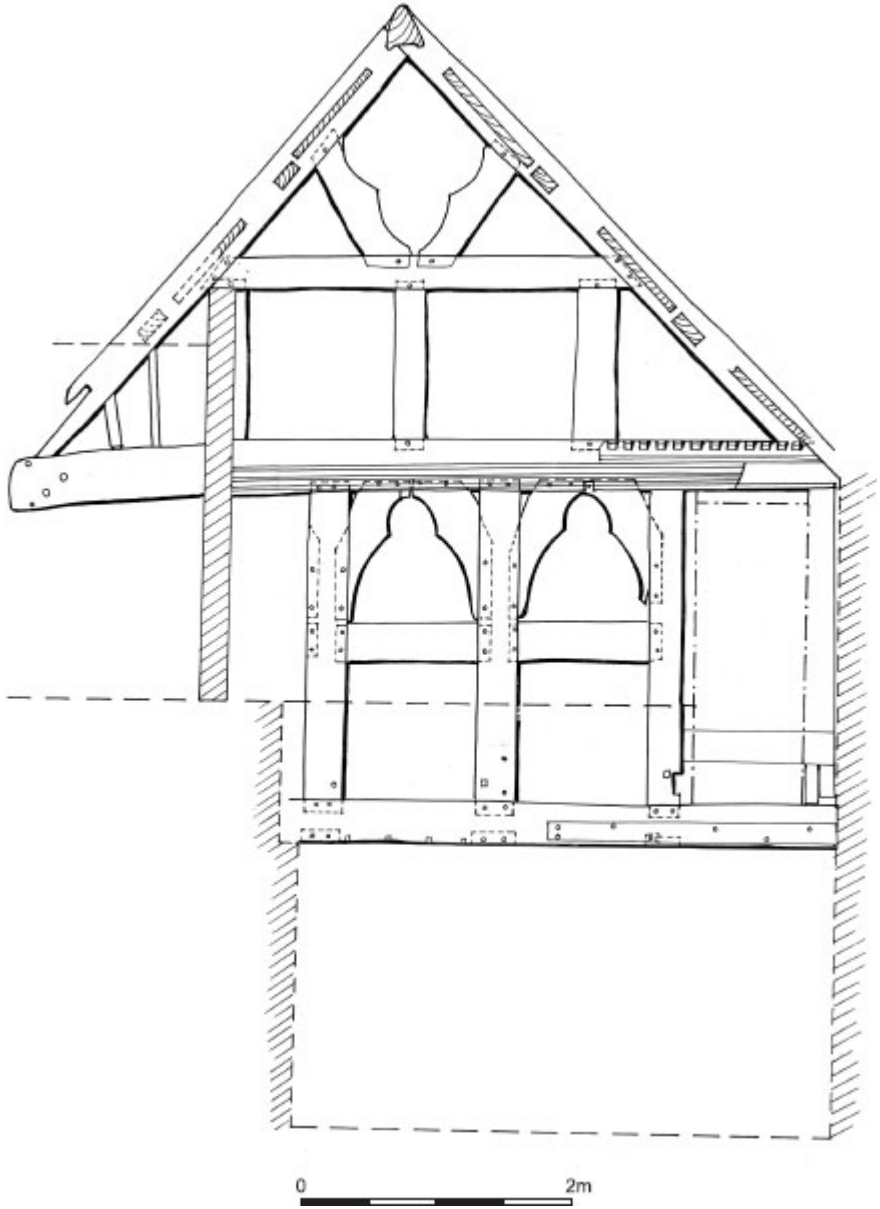


Figure 2.46 The interior face of the rear (south) gable wall of 50a Commercial Street prior to renovation. This truss, at least, survived the division of the former hall. The absence of cusped braces and mid-rail on the right-hand side suggests the position of a primary first-floor doorway

It seems quite clear that this was the relatively small but richly decorated open hall of a later medieval merchant's house that would have been associated with a commercial frontage block and additional buildings to the rear. The frontage block was rebuilt in the early to mid-18th century and had probably been rebuilt at least once before

that.

The building to the south of the hall contains vestigial remains of timber framing but has not been examined in any depth. It may well be that the arrangement here was a standard medieval one, with a two-storey frontage block containing shops on the ground floor with a solar above, an open hall in the centre, and a service wing to the rear; perhaps beyond the service wing was a separate kitchen block.

It is possible that the apparent absence of trefoil bracing or of a secondary rail in the westernmost first-floor bay of the south gable frame indicates the position of a doorway – in the position of the present doorway leading to a later floor inserted into the former open hall. Clearly such a doorway would not have made sense if the hall was originally open from ground to roof and not sub-divided in any way. One possible explanation for such a doorway may relate to the available plot on which the hall was built. If, as could be expected in an urban context, it was only as wide as the hall itself, then clearly there would have been a problem of access between the front and rear ranges. In similar cases elsewhere, this was resolved by creating a ground-floor passage down one or other side of the hall itself, inside its walls. At first-floor level this could be matched by another passage or gallery. The fact that such an arrangement would have negated the cost and trouble of putting trefoiled heads in the upper part of the west wall makes this seem doubtful, though certainly not impossible. Instead it seems more probable that the doorway was reached by way of a stair from within the hall. That being the case, it would suggest that the first-floor room over the rear block was of high status. That, in turn, could even suggest that it was the solar itself, either over a parlour or possibly over the services – depending on the original layout of the property.

The quality of the carving and the nature of the overall design suggest that this hall was part of the home of a well-to-do family. There are very faint traces of wall-paintings in the south gable frame that may be medieval, but their survival is minimal. The architectural details indicate a late 14th- or early 15th-century date and are typical of the regional style of that period.

In the post-medieval period, probably in the late 16th or early 17th century, the hall was divided horizontally by the insertion of a first floor. At the same time the resultant upper chamber was ceiled at collar-beam level.

Discussion

No. 50a Commercial Street contains the remains of a high-status, ground-floor open hall of *c.*1400, laid out at right-angles to the street

and probably associated with solar and service functions at either end. It is likely that there was commercial use of the frontage at ground-floor level. Superficially, it is consistent with one of the most common forms of medieval tenement planning, in which different functions are accommodated in-line down the length of a narrow plot. This is what W. A. Pantin described 50 years ago as the 'right-angle type/narrow' form of tenement plan (Pantin 1962–3, 230), characteristic of towns, or parts of towns, where there was fierce competition for major trading frontages. As discussed, the possible first-floor doorway in the west side of the hall's back (south) wall would be consistent with this, whether it represented access to a gallery along the side of the hall down the length of the plot, or stairs up to a solar from the body of the hall.

However, as at 41a Bridge Street, there are indications – in this case in the documentary record – that the present, narrow, property is but a fragment of a much more spacious late-medieval arrangement. This comes from the inventory of the rooms made nearly 200 years later, in 1567, which implies that the complex was constructed around a courtyard. This can be read specifically in the reference to 'the Chamber by the Courte', though the sheer number of rooms listed conveys the distinct impression that the property could not have been confined to a single narrow burgage. The list of rooms is worth reiterating – the great chamber, the chimney chamber, middle chamber, stair chamber, the chamber by the court, the hall, the great parlour, little parlour, buttery, great and little kitchens, the larder house, the chamber over the larder house and the bolting house (see above, pp. 59 and 63). Of these fourteen spaces we have firm physical evidence of only one – the hall – though the inserted floor within it almost certainly led to the creation of one of the (probably first-floor) chambers itemised. The great chamber is most likely to have been at first-floor level over the frontage, but in general the arrangement of the rooms, and the buildings that contained them, is obscure. Returning to the Ordnance Survey mapping of 1886 (Fig. 2.40), it may be that the medieval plot associated with the surviving open hall stretched from Union Passage on the north-east to the boundary with the Inland Revenue Office to the south-west.

The 1567 inventory clearly describes a building complex that had been modernised, probably not long before. The presence of a chimney (as in the chimney chamber) is one sign of this, the wainscot 'ceiling' of the hall may be another – though this may refer to the panelling of the walls. The sheer multiplicity of chambers is a surer sign, as is the profusion of beds, panelling and hangings in them. On

the ground floor it is also interesting that the hall contained a 'large table' (with forms and trestles) but that the 'great table' was to be found in the great parlour: the social heart of the household had, it seems, already shifted from the hall.

(8) Pool Farm (Figs 2.47–2.51; Plate 16)

Introduction

As its name implies, Pool Farm is, in origin, a rural building, despite being well within the modern city limits. When it was built it would have been several hundred metres beyond the small bridge-head suburb of St Martin's, south of the Wye, on the western side of the old main road leading south-west towards Abergavenny. Its rural location presumably meant that it had a relatively unrestricted site and that any plan-form could have been chosen for it. It did, nevertheless, have a containing plot, one of a series of broad, irregular plots running off Winston Street, the continuation of St Martin's Street. The core of the building is a two-bay open hall of *c.*1500, with a cross-passage at its southern end and a two-storey block beyond. To the north of the hall a contemporaneous stair tower separates the hall from a four-bay cross-wing. This contained a room at the western end that was open to the roof, and may have been a kitchen, with a two-bay chamber of some status next to it on the first floor. The open hall was ceiled over fairly soon, probably before the end of the 16th century; in 1624 the present porch was added to the front door, at the southern end of the hall cross-passage.

Historical background

Pool Farm was part of the endowment of the Custos and Vicars' Choral of Hereford Cathedral. As far as can be ascertained it formed part of the holding known as the manor of Brandon, which was, from at least the 15th century, let with the manor of Winston or Winnaston. The manor is well mapped; it included Causeway Farm – now demolished – adjoining Pool Farm to the north, which was partly St Ethelbert's Hospital property and partly belonged to the Vicars' Choral.[39] It also included much of the land on both sides of Belmont Road as far as Newton. The manor did not, however, include either Pool House (demolished) or Pool Farm. These, it must be inferred, belonged in the manor of Brandon.

From the earliest available deeds until the late 19th century, the two little manors were let together. In the late 17th century the lessee

was John Clerk. The 1664 Hearth Tax indicates that he lived at Pool House and presumably let Pool Farm to a sub-tenant. From the Hearth Tax it would appear that this was Henry Eyles; he paid for two hearths, but nothing further is known about him.

Very little has been discovered about the building. The farm was leased to a series of tenants who left no documentation and whose main preoccupation was the land. Various plans of the farmland survive but they tell us nothing about the house. The impression gained from the rapid turnover in tenants and the decrease in the acreage of land held over the 40-year period is that the farm was becoming run down.[40] It may be significant that, in 1888, the Vicars' Choral ceased to lease the farm as part of the manor of Winnaston and Brandon and began to collect the rents themselves. The tenant was then Richard Millichamp, a 52-year-old widower with four sons. He was followed by his eldest son, Frank, who continued to rent the farm until 1914. Another H. Millichamp was farming in the area in 1922. During the latter part of this period repairs to the property are noted: an oak post for Pool Farm in 1911, an estimate of £11 12s 6d accepted for re-flooring the living room in 1912, more repairs and repainting the same year, and repairs to the cowshed and cartshed in 1914 and 1915.[41]

Comparison of Taylor's map of 1757 and the large scale Ordnance Survey map of 1883 suggests that the layout of the farmhouse had changed very little during this time. However, the tithe map of the 1840s departs from this layout in two respects. First, the south-west corner of the building, where the other two maps show a separate range, has been infilled; second, the tithe map shows a considerable extension to the east of the building into the area identified as garden in 1883. Some indication of this encroachment appears on Taylor's map but not in such marked form.

By 1919 the Custos and Vicars' Choral were making moves to sell the farm and part of it was indeed sold at that date. The rest went in 1930, when the lease of Pool Farmhouse was sold to Mr Albany Ward for £800. During the war much of the farmland was compulsorily purchased by the Ministry for Supply and was subsequently bought by the City of Hereford for use as a housing estate. The farmhouse was bought by the City in 1971 and converted into two council houses.[42] Pool Farm is currently in use by Oasis Dental Care as a dental surgery.

Description

Although the walls have been partly rebuilt in brick and the original panel infills replaced with nogging of the same material, the timber framing of the four historic elements of the house survive more or less

intact. The two larger elements consist of a southern hall range and, at its north end (more correctly north-east), a northern cross-wing. In the angle between the two is a contemporary stair-tower and, protecting the entrance into the hall range off Belmont Road, a later porch. There are also small extensions in brick to both main wings.

The hall wing is now of two storeys and approximately 11.5 m long and 5.8 m wide. The side framing is very simple square panelling. Each of the posts rise or rose the full height between sole and wall-plates and the three rails are all interrupted by them. There are four rows of panels in all, though these are not complete on either elevation. In the south-east (front wall) frame there are indications in the soffit of the wall-plate, towards its south-west end, of the position of an original mullioned window. On the frontage it is noticeable that all of the posts lean a little to the south-west, the whole frame apparently racking in the past. The south-west gable was of the same framing but the lower two rows of panels have been underbuilt in brick. At either side, the truss tie is supported by short, cusped, curving braces. The truss itself has a collar with a single central strut between it and the tie-beam. The truss takes the ends of two tiers of purlins supporting the plain gabled roof.

The building was originally divided into two main parts: a two-bay open hall in the north-east and a two-storey portion in the south-west. The two were separated by a ground-floor cross-passage, still fossilised within the present internal arrangements. The front door to the passage was the main entrance to the house and was later protected by the porch. The present doorway is secondary but there are traces of the primary opening next to it. There was a doorway on the opposite side, but this was later converted into a window. There was no ephemeral screen between this passage and the hall, as would have been typical for the period. Instead, there was a full cross-frame between the passage and the hall, parts of which survive. This appears to have been close-studded and may have had ground-floor doorways at either end; much has been removed later.

The hall to the north-east was originally open to the roof and the present first floor is an early insertion. The intermediate truss is of arch-braced collar form and the arch-braces spring from the capitals of colonettes carved out of the intermediate bay posts on either side. These colonettes continue down through the present floor level. They would have been designed to be seen and the floor obviously post-dates them. The original hall would have been just under 6 m long and would therefore have been almost square in plan. There are no traces of smoke blackening in the roof timbers. It is possible that the

hall was heated by a lateral stack rather than by an open hearth, but the position of the stack is not known.

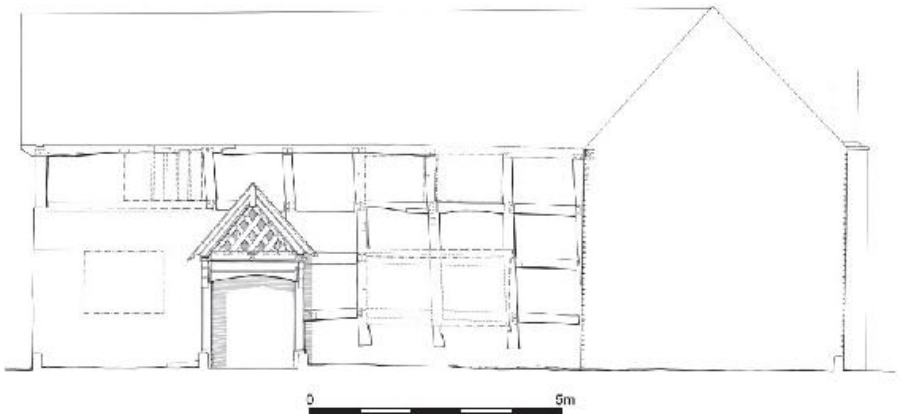


Figure 2.47 The front (south-east) elevation of Pool Farm (framing partly reconstructed)

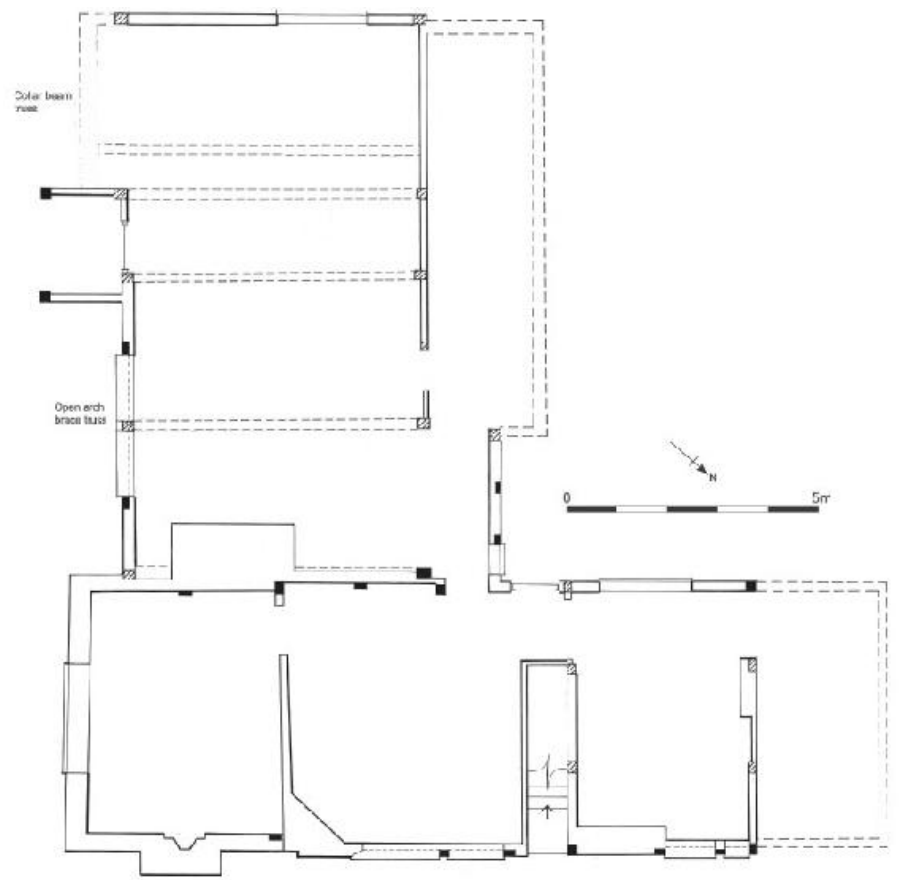


Figure 2.48 Ground-floor plan of Pool Farm. The porch identifies the line of the cross-

passage separating the open hall from a ground-floor room with a chamber over. The stack identifies the position of the probable stair block giving access to the (later) service cross-wing

Figure 2.49 Detail of one of the arch-braces of the intermediate frame in the former open hall of Pool Farm, springing from the moulded capital at the top of a colonette integral to the bay post

The south-west end of the hall wing was divided differently at ground- and first-floor levels. The partition frame to the south-west of the cross-passage was only one storey high. The rest of the ground floor to the south-west of it seems to have been one room, although given its position, it is possible that this area was once divided by an axial frame into a pantry and buttery. The first-floor space originally seems to have been one room between the gable wall and the main partition frame north-east of the passage. In the centre is an open, collared truss, but this does not line up with any of the posts in the side frames.

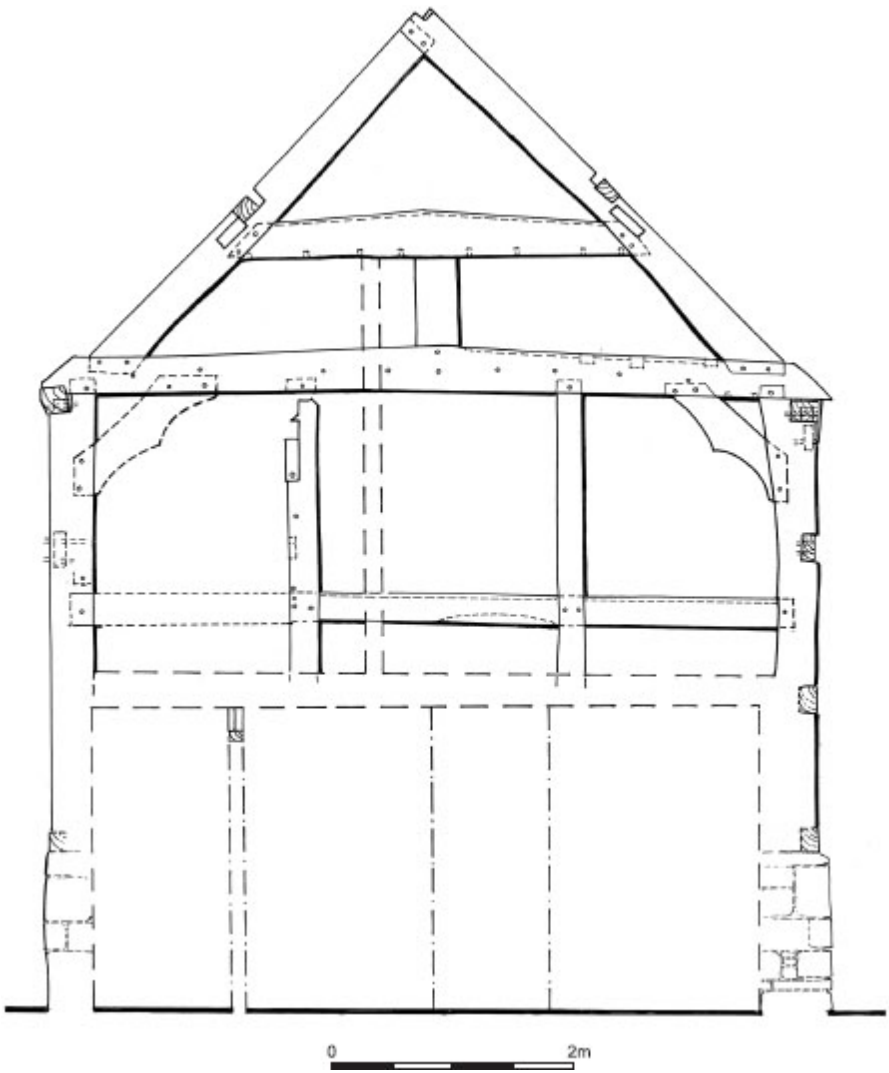


Figure 2.50 The north-west gable end of the northern service cross-wing of Pool Farm

It is possible that the original wing was a small but self-contained hall house, with the two-bay open hall in the north-east section. To the south-west of the cross-passage at the low end of the hall were the buttery and pantry and the solar was on the floor above, over these rooms and the passage. The wing was probably erected at the end of the medieval period, perhaps around 1500 or slightly earlier.

At a later date a first floor was inserted into the open hall, structurally based on a substantial chamfered bridging beam between the intermediate bay posts; this was probably added in the later 16th century. Further alterations in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries have completely altered the character of the interior.

The suggested simplicity of the medieval composition is compromised by the apparent links between this wing, the north wing, and the stair tower. The hall range seems to have had primary door openings into both of the other ranges, despite being structurally independent.

The four-bay, two-storey, northern cross-wing is approximately 14 m long (NW–SE) and 5.4 m wide. It forms a reversed ‘L-plan’ with the hall range but also slightly projects at the south-east end. Large sections of its framing have been removed but enough survives to allow a reasonable interpretation of its original design. The panelling of the side frames was virtually identical to that of the hall range, with four rows of square panels between sole and wall-plates. However, the lower row appears to have been replaced by a tall stone plinth in antiquity. The south-east gable elevation has been rebuilt in brick, and is topped by a close-studded single-collared truss. This projects from the brickwork and its tie is supported by consoles on either side; it is possible that the first-floor framing of this elevation was jettied.

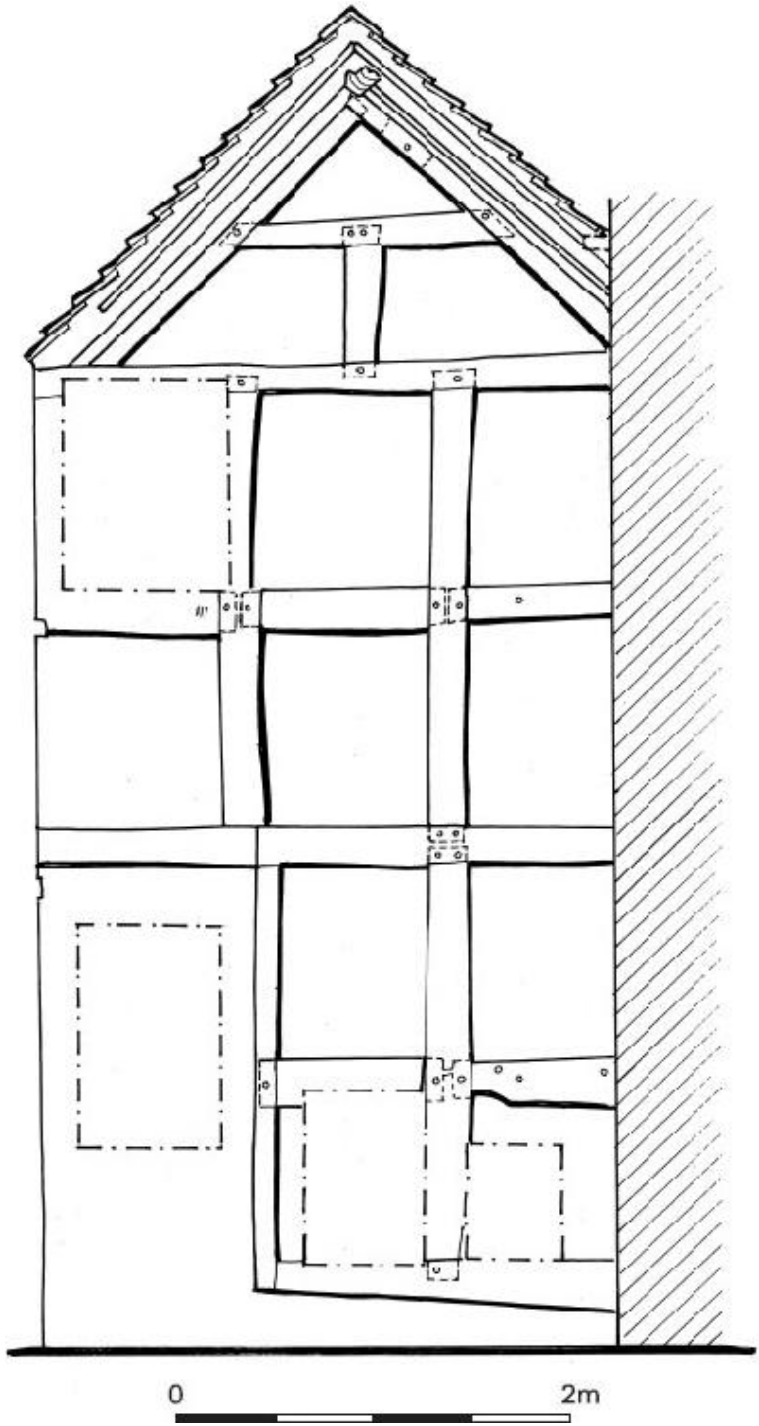


Figure 2.51 The gable elevation of the stair tower in the angle between the hall and northern service cross-wing of Pool Farm

At the other end of the wing the north-west gable is similar to the

south-west gable of the hall range, but there is one significant difference. This frame has larger panels, with only three rows instead of four, despite the fact that the side frames originally had four rows of panels. The truss tie is supported by a cusped curving bracket on the north side and there are mortices for a matching bracket, since removed, on the south side. These would have matched those in the gable of the hall range, though they are slightly different in being a little longer and having distinct open spandrels. The truss, with a single collar and central king strut rising to it from the tie, is also very similar, but takes only one tier of purlins instead of two.

The interior has been radically altered on several occasions as the building has been adapted for modem living and multiple occupancy. Originally the ground floor seems to have been divided into three full-width rooms, those in the north-western half each occupying a full bay, with a larger two-bay room in the south-eastern half. The central cross-frame has been removed but there is evidence of a primary door head at its south end. The other cross-frame at this level survives, and was three panels wide in the same manner as the north-west gable frame.

The north-west bay may have been open to the roof, where there are traces of soot blackening. There appears originally to have been no access into the first-floor part of this bay through the adjacent cross-frame. The bay to its south-east is the narrowest in the wing, 2.5 m wide, and there are traces of a primary doorway through the east side wall that would have led from it into the stair tower. At first-floor level there was evidently a large, central two-bay chamber, with a single-bay chamber to the east. This storey is ceiled at collar height but was probably originally open to the roof. The bay posts have flared jowls to take the ends of the truss ties. The trusses on the cross-frames are hidden behind plaster but are probably of the same simple collar form as the west gable.

This wing is of similar architectural character to the hall wing but, structurally, is probably a little later. It was presumably added to provide more accommodation on the site, though there is no evidence available to suggest whether or not it replaced an earlier wing serving a similar function. The large first-floor room was of high status in the hierarchy of the house. The apparent lack of a first floor within the north-western bay, coupled with soot blackening in the roof above, could suggest that it was a kitchen

As this range is of two storeys, it would have needed access between them, and it is almost certain that it was built at the same time as the adjacent stair tower. There are clear similarities between

this and the hall wing, and a mid-16th-century date is suggested. The stair tower is a narrow, single-bay, timber-framed structure in the angle between the two wings. It is about 3.5 m long and just over l.2 m wide. This seems very narrow for a stair tower, but it would have needed only to accommodate a single flight from the hall range up to the first-floor of the cross-wing. If there was an alternative logical position for a stair, then this structure could have had a different function – the most obvious of which would have been a garderobe; however, no other primary stair position has been identified. The framing matches that in the adjacent frames of both wings, being four panels high. It is topped by a small, cross-gabled roof supported partly on the west slope of the hall range. Its end truss is a miniature version of the end trusses of the hall and cross-wing, with a single collar and strut. Generally, the evidence suggests that the stair tower was contemporary with the northern cross-wing.

The small porch protecting the front door to the ground-floor cross-passage in the hall wing is dated 1624 on a shield on the tie-beam. Its general design and architectural character do not contradict such a date. Its side walls have been rebuilt in brick. The front elevation has a full-width opening between the moulded corner posts. A lintel-piece tenoned into the posts just below the truss-tie continues the mouldings above a recessed, depressed, four-centred head. The slightly cambered tie-beam has a plain, ovolo moulding. The space between the principal rafters is infilled by small diamond-pattern lattice work made up of crossed raking-struts. The truss is protected by broad, moulded barge-boards supported on carved consoles and meeting at a plain pendant that has presumably lost its original decorative finish.

Discussion

This is a property singularly ill-served by documentary records, despite the fact that it was administered by the Cathedral. Until the 20th century, Pool Farm lay outside the city boundary which meant that land was of much more value than the buildings. The farm was occupied by tenants who made no impact on the official records, neither were they sufficiently affluent for details of their personal property to have survived. For this reason, although interesting and detailed plans exist of the farmland, there are no recorded details of the house or buildings, merely lists of who paid rent to the Vicars' Choral, and the occasional 20th-century repair bill.

Nevertheless, the house is an important, if much altered, late-medieval complex. The hall wing appears to pre-date the northern cross-wing and stair tower but the chronology may not be simple. Indeed, it is just possible that all three were contemporary and that

the stair tower was really an oriel, with access from the great hall to the great chamber on the first floor of the wing.

On balance, however, it does seem that the cross-wing and tower were built slightly after the hall wing, though possibly within a generation. It is also possible that the construction of the new sections also coincided with the flooring over of the great hall. Such a short phase for a late-medieval open hall is not unusual, the classic example being at Plas Mawr, Conwy, where a splendidly carved 16th-century roof over the hall was built – but never seen because of the new fashion for warmer rooms with ceilings.

This was probably one of the last of the hall houses built in Hereford, but it needs to be seen in its context, outside the space restrictions of the city and its suburbs. This was a conservative design, built in a rural location.

Notes

1 The figure quoted by Storer and Storer (1816) seems excessive for the period and the statement may be erroneous.
2 R J King (1864, 107) adds 'The chapter house was ruined by Parliamentary forces and much of its stonework was used by Bishop Bisse and his successors until recently for the repairs of the episcopal palace'.
3 HRO HD 8/17
4 e.g. HCL R604, 605
5 From Barrow, J (ed.), *English Episcopal Acta* 7, no. 257, quoted in Aylmer and Tiller 2000, 34.
6 Chapter Act Book, Hereford Cath Lib. 1571 p.34v. The marginal note has been added to this earlier volume in a hand similar to that used for such notes until *c.*1640.
7 HRO HD 10/47
8 HRO HA 102
9 Historical Muniments of Hereford Vol III (typescript HCL), p. 1104, Doc 2859
10 Thomas Bannister (ed) *Registrium Thome Spofford* (Hereford 1917), p. 112
11 HRO Hereford City Misc. papers VI 42
12 HLC 5093
13 HRO GH 1/135 &136
14 HCL 7031/4 f.96v
15 HCL 7031/4 f 196/7; 395
16 HCL 7020/2/3; Lascelles Directory 1851; Census 1861; HCL 7005/11 p. 133
17 HCL 7031/Chapter (1911–31) Act Book, p. 563 with plan.
18 Historical Muniments of Hereford Vol III (typescript HCL), p. 1149 /1501
19 Hereford Cathedral Muniments Vol II, p. 466; III, pp 1273, 1280
20 HCL Chapter Act Book Vol I, 1515
21 TNA Prob 11/22
22 HCL 4520
23 *Ibid*
24 Pevsner N, *Herefordshire* (1963) p. 188, gives a rebuilding date of 1739
25 HCL 4520(xii)
26 Church Commissioners Hereford Bishopric Estates File 43180; HCL RS2/A/

l/12 p. 57
27 HCL 3481
28 HCL 7003/1/1 p. 13
29 HCL 7003/1/3 p. 42
30 HCL 4676; 7003/1/3 p. 81
31 K11/37962
32 HCL 7003/1/4 p. 270; 7003/2/1/2
33 Census records for Bridge Street 1841–91; HRO AH 70/83, 86, 96–120, 135, 171, 196, 214, Poor Rate records St. Nicholas' parish
34 HRO Will and inventory Sarah Seaborne 1714
35 This deduction is based on comparisons of the rate books listed above and between the amounts levied for these houses in the overseers accounts AH 70/83–86.
36 Worcestershire RO 705:24 BA 81/1130
37 HRO P1/5 f.81 Great Black Book
38 HRO P1/5 f.426/427 Great Black Book
39 HCL 7004/1, pp 39/40, 55/56
40 Comparison of acreage in census records
41 HCL 7003/1/7; 7003/2/14
42 HCL 7003/1/7, pp 295–300, 325, 345–8; Hereford Town Hall H32/7, H 32/9

3

Post-medieval houses, *c.* 1500–*c.* 1700

Pat Hughes and Richard Morriss

Case-study Buildings 9 to 24 are presented in this chapter, covering the period after *c.*1500 (although where dendrochronology dates are absent, distinguishing just pre-1500 from just post-1500 is not always easy). The geographical spread is, however, quite distinct from that of the medieval hall houses examined in Chapter 2. Now, it is the commercial city that dominates the sample, concentrated on High Town and its main frontages. But, quite fortuitously, the rest of the early modern commercial city is well-represented here as well: the back lanes of High Town, properties just within the city gates, and two suburban houses.

As before, there is considerable variability in the scope of individual case-study building investigations and in the measured drawings available from them. Much of this variability arises from the circumstances in which the surveys were originally commissioned, mostly in the 1980s and 90s, and the accessibility of the historic fabric to the surveyors – whether or not, for example, timber-framing had been stripped of its covering, or whether the property being investigated constituted the whole, or just part, of a historic building. Occasionally, in the course of 20 years in the archives, drawings have become separated from their scale information, and are thus presented without.

(9) 26–27 High Town (Figs 3.1–3.13; Plate 17)

Introduction

Nos 26–27 High Town, currently W. H. Smith's and Clinton's Cards, lies towards the western end of the southern High Town frontage, the properties running back, over the infilled Saxon city ditch, to East Street, formerly Packers Lane, at the rear. This has been the

commercial heart of Hereford from shortly after the Norman Conquest and, as such, a focus for mercantile investment in new buildings. The plots here are consistently amongst the narrowest in the city, a product of intense competition for space on one of the trading frontages of the Norman market place. These plots also offered the advantage of ready-made rear access, via Packers Lane (East Street), thus avoiding the need to sacrifice scarce frontage space for cart entries; East Street and West Street still have the character of a rear service lane.

The two properties had quite separate histories and buildings until being combined to form the King's Head Inn in the mid-17th century. The frontage of 26 High Town, to the east, is a three-bay, three-and-a-half storey timber-framed building of the early to mid-17th century. The single, large, undivided rooms on each floor suggest that smaller service rooms have been lost with the demolition of ranges to the rear. No. 27 High Town, to the west, now has a brick-built frontage block of *c.*1800 built up against a surviving rear frame of late 16th-century date, behind which is a slightly later timber-framed building of two bays and three storeys. This is jettied at first- and second-floor level facing onto a passage between the two properties. With the establishment of the King's Head, the properties were amalgamated, the passage was built over, and new access was cut between the old buildings. A room-by-room probate inventory was made in 1706, and the surveyors' route through the premises, and through the access cut between the two old buildings, can be reconstructed.

Historical background

Although these two houses were erected as separate buildings, the same documentation has been used for each; for this reason it is most convenient to treat them together. It has not been possible to compile a continuous history of either house, but glimpses can be obtained of their ownership, particularly in the mid-16th century and the second half of the 17th century. The Great Black Book of Hereford Corporation contains copy deeds enrolled with the Mayor's Court in the 16th century. Comparison between two deeds in this volume and information from the Vicars' Choral records identifies these houses as 26, 27 and 28 in High Town (next to Narrow Cabbage Lane, now the northern end of Church Street). No. 27 was in the hands of Richard Bromwich and 26 belonged to John Sheward.[1] It is interesting to note that at this date 27 stretched right back to Packers Lane, but disappointing to find no reference to the actual building of any of the properties.

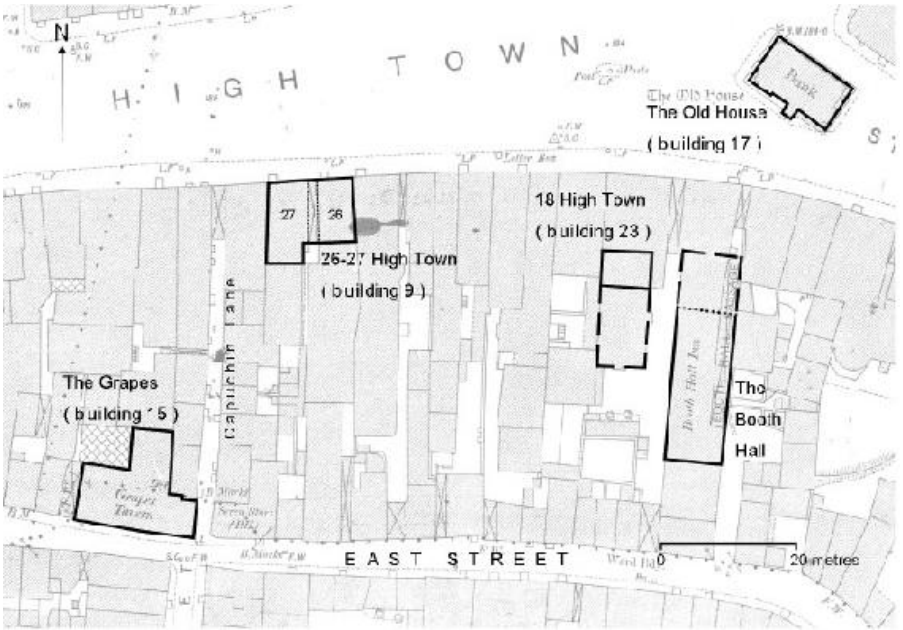


Figure 3.1 The south side of High Town. Location plan for case-study Buildings 9, 15, 17 and 23, together with the 15th-century Booth Hall, based on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1886

A deed for 27 June 1725 also relates to this building. It concerns a court case in which George Wilson, in order to pay back borrowed money, finally sold to John Hunt for £400:

a messuage tenement or dwelling house … now John Hunt, formerly called by the name of the King's Head Tavern adjoining on the east side to a house and building now in the possession of John Hooper called the Sun Tavern [identified as no. 25[2]] and on the west to a house and buildings now in the possession of Elizabeth Davies widow and extends from the High Street on the north to a Lane called the Back Lane behind the Sun on the south part thereof.[3]

Both the St Peter's Poor Rate lists and the 1665 Hearth Tax put John Jones in the property in 1665 and James Pasey in the early 1700s. John Jones appears as the owner of the Kings Head in the 1655 Lawday documents.[4] In the 1680s the Lawday records reported a fracas 'in a certain room at the Kings Head tavern called the Hall' when 'Mr James Aston threw a glass of sack in the face of Simon Planck calling him son of a whore' and claiming his parents were not married; a Christopher Jones was implicated.

As was often the case, both men had an alternative trade. While Pasey was a barber, it is possible that John Jones was a carrier, although there was also a carrier of that name, possibly a son, in

Widemarsh Street (see p. 113). Jones obviously had stables at the rear of the High Town building abutting East Street, because he was several times indicted for leaving dunghills in that street.[5] James Pasey's will of 1705 calls him a barber, but his inventory describes a large inn. The third room listed belonged to a Mr Jones, probably the previous landlord. The extent of Pasey's accommodation and the number of hearths paid for by Jones in the 1660s argue for the inn having spread over more than one plot, and the inventory, together with the survey evidence, indicate that 26 and 27 were in joint use at this time.

Just how the inn passed from John Jones to James Pasey is not known, but the fact that Jones was still living there suggests that Pasey was a relative; perhaps he married Jones' daughter. The evidence of the Hearth Tax implies a prosperous inn and the premises do not appear to have changed much in size between the assessment for ten hearths in the 1660s and Pasey's own death in 1706, when an inventory of his belongings were made for probate.[6] The two houses had already been modified, with the jetty of 27 extended over the passage and a door between the two buildings cut through the timber frame on the upper floor.

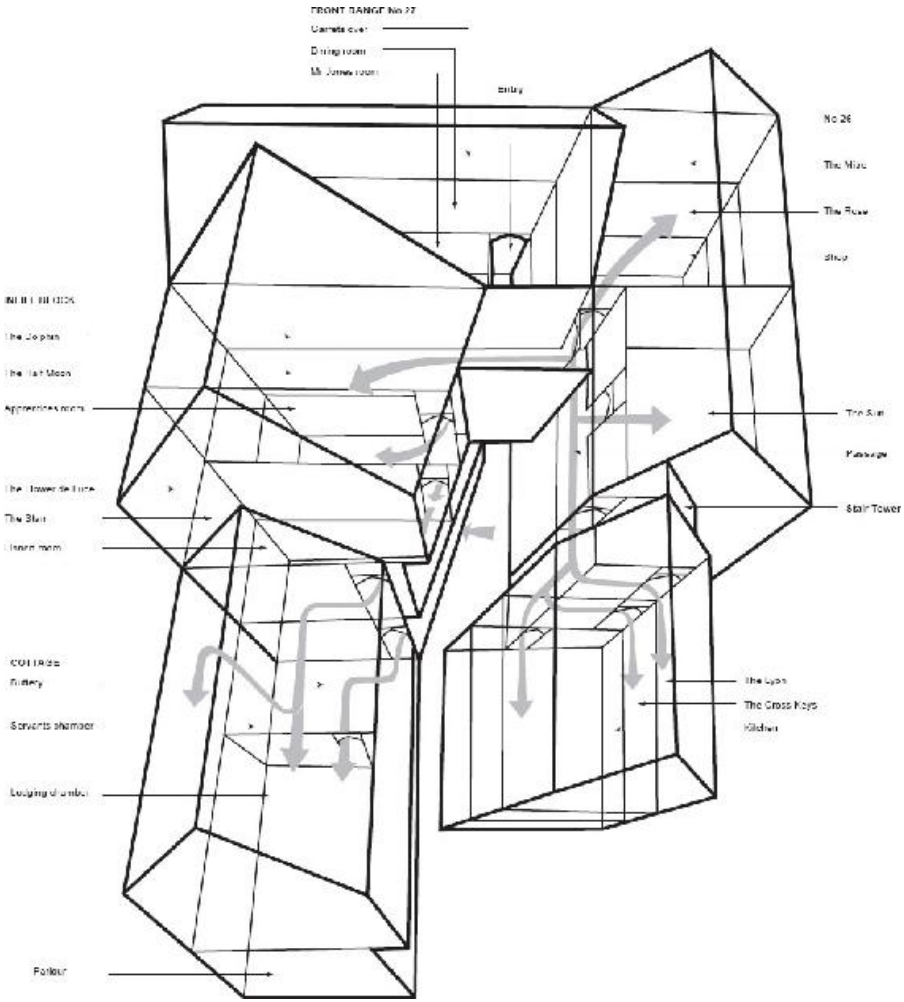
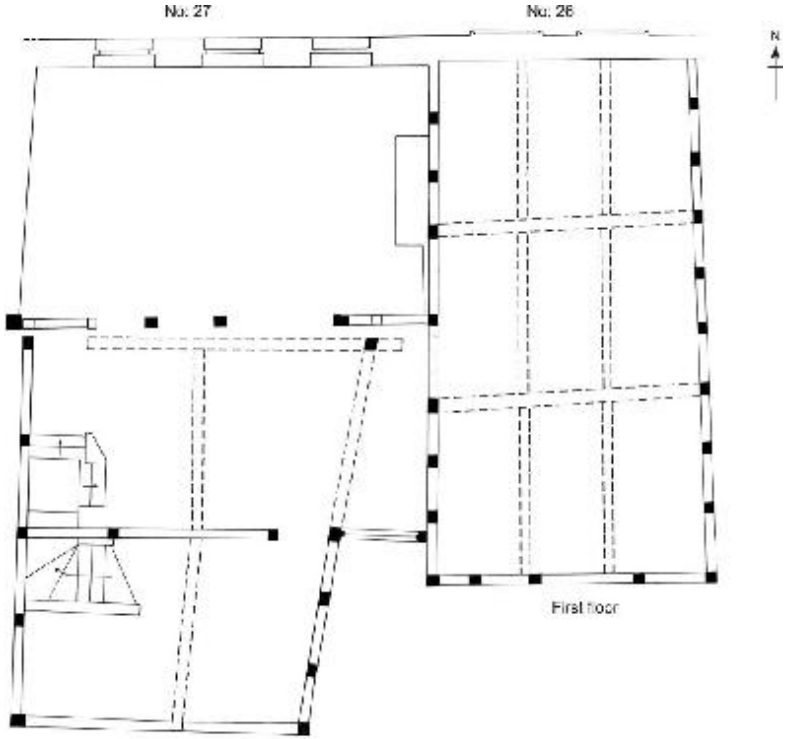


Figure 3.2 Annotated schematic reconstruction of 26 and 27 High Town showing the route taken by the appraisers at the time of the 1706 inventory and identifying most of the individual rooms

The rooms described in the inventory fit excellently into the known part of 26–27, although extensive demolition of the rear of the properties makes it impossible to complete the correlation. In preparing the accompanying reconstruction, the rooms have been taken mainly in the order in which they appear in the inventory, with special attention paid to matching chimneys to rooms with hearth equipment, and doorways to survey evidence. The valuers started at the top of the house, with the attics in the front building of 27; they then progressed to the ground floor, crossed the yard and dealt with the upper floors of 26. They then re-entered 27 through the door cut for that purpose in the upper west frame of 26, and worked their way down to the ground floor of 27 (Fig. 3.2).


No: 27
No: 26
N
First floor

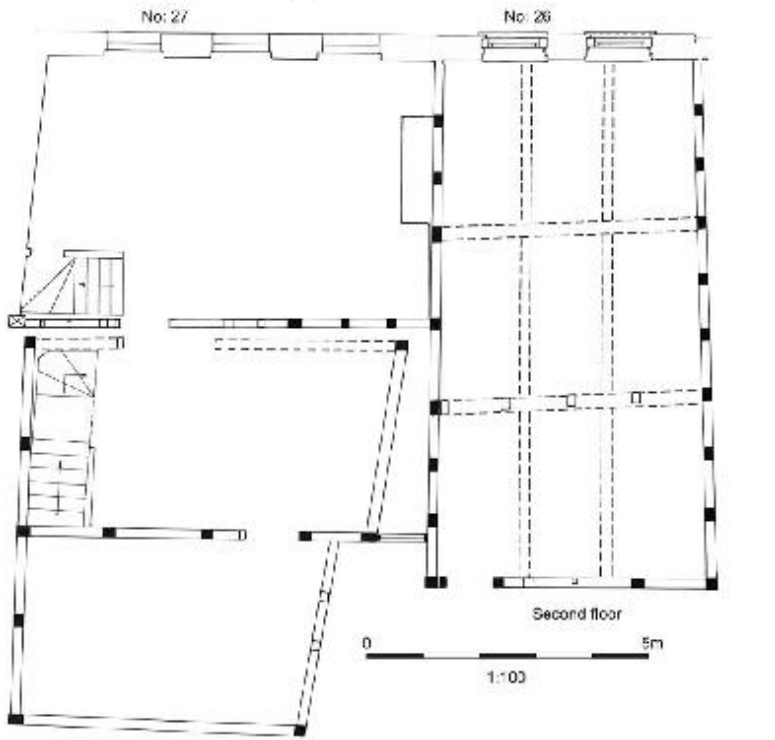

No: 27
No: 26
Second floor
0
5m
1:100

Figure 3.3 First- and second-floor plans of 26 and 27 High Town, showing the surviving timber-framing, main floor beams and the existing stairs

The ‘cottage’ block behind 27 seems to have housed the parlour and buttery, with James Pasey’s own comfortably furnished lodging above. Otherwise most of the inn was sparsely furnished, with the rooms, despite their exotic names, containing only a bed and chairs. Pasey’s barber’s shop (at the front of 26) and the kitchen (behind) appear to be out of order and, due to the demolition of the rear buildings it is impossible to locate either the back kitchen, used for brewing, or the hall with tables, glassware and bar, which must have been near Packers Lane at the rear. This may be the reason why James Pasey was charged with allowing ‘unlawful games’ at the ‘Sunn Tavern back door’.[7]

According to St Peter’s Poor Rate lists, the occupants of the property after James Pasey were, first, John Lock, about whom nothing is known, and then John Hodges, who styled himself innkeeper. He died in 1723 and at this point the documentary evidence ceases until the end of the century. It would appear from the deed of 1725 that, by this time, the inn had ceased to trade.

Figure 3.4 The removal of the first floor of the front portion of 26 High Town (in W H Smith's) gives an unusual and dramatic view of the relatively simple pattern of the first-floor framing and the ceiling beams

Little evidence for the use of either building is available for the remainder of the 18th century; in the 19th century 27 became a mercer's shop and then a large draper's shop; it continued as a draper's establishment until 1984. By 1881 the adjacent no. 26 had become a shop, with no living accommodation above, the upper floors being merely used for storage for more than a century, a circumstance

that has preserved intact many of the features of the earlier building.

Description – 26 High Town (Figs 3.4–3.9)

Behind its later two-bay, three-storey facade to High Town, 26 is a recently restored three-bay, three-and-a-half storey timber-framed structure. The facade has a broad arched shop front which cuts into the original first-floor level; the windows above on the 'first' floor are actually at the original second-floor level, and the 'second' floor windows light the original attic level. The timber framing is fairly intact above the original first-floor level. Below that level there is a surviving section beneath the later stack of the west frame, which shows this level to have been of three rows of panels – the same as on the two main upper floors; curiously, this seems to have supported the brick stack.

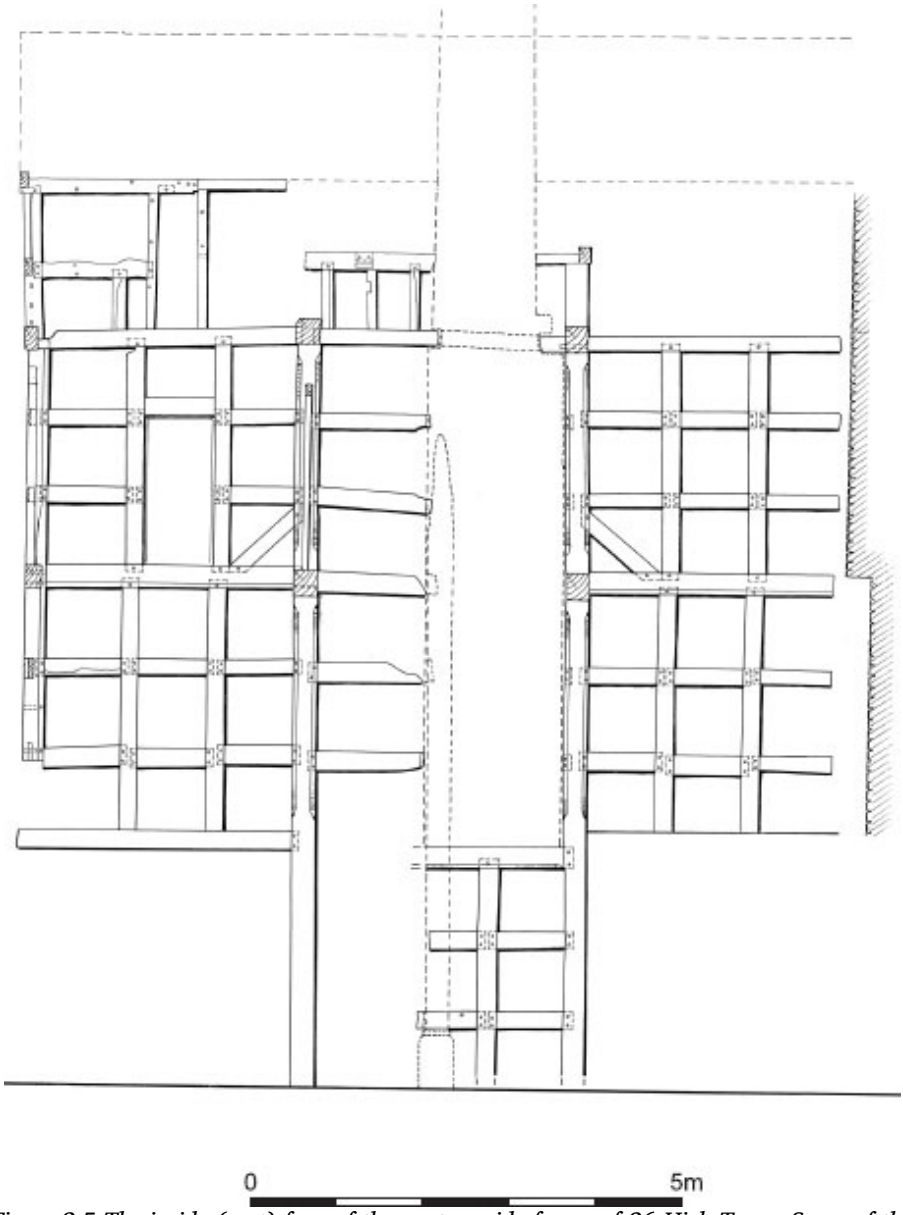


Figure 3.5 The inside (east) face of the western side frame of 26 High Town. Some of the simple square framing was lost to accommodate a stack, the attic has been remodelled, and the front frame (to the right) replaced in brickwork. Note, at second-floor level towards the left, a doorway inserted into the frame to link 26 with 27

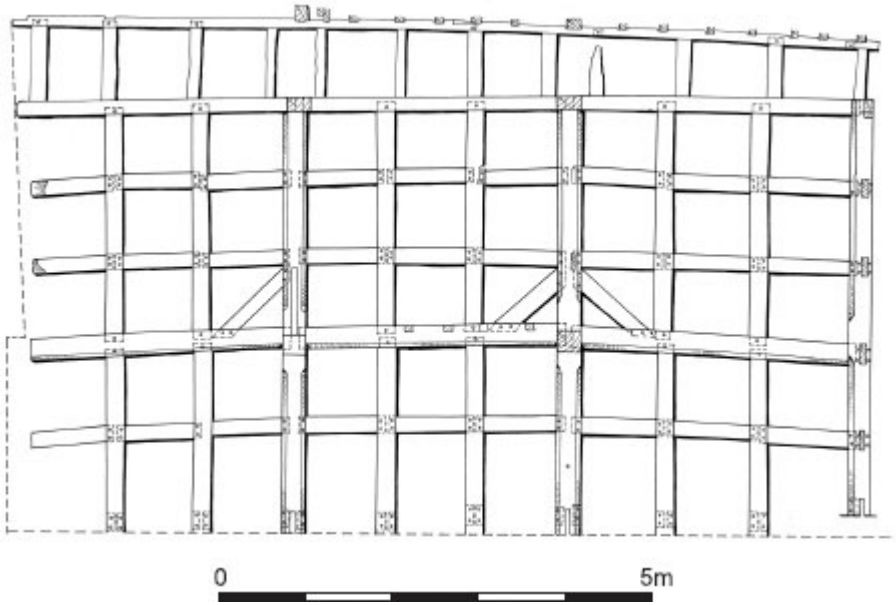


Figure 3.6 The inner face of the eastern side-frame of 26 High Town, showing it survives intact above first-floor level. The limited use of tension braces in the framing is noticeable. The attic section of the framing is a later addition

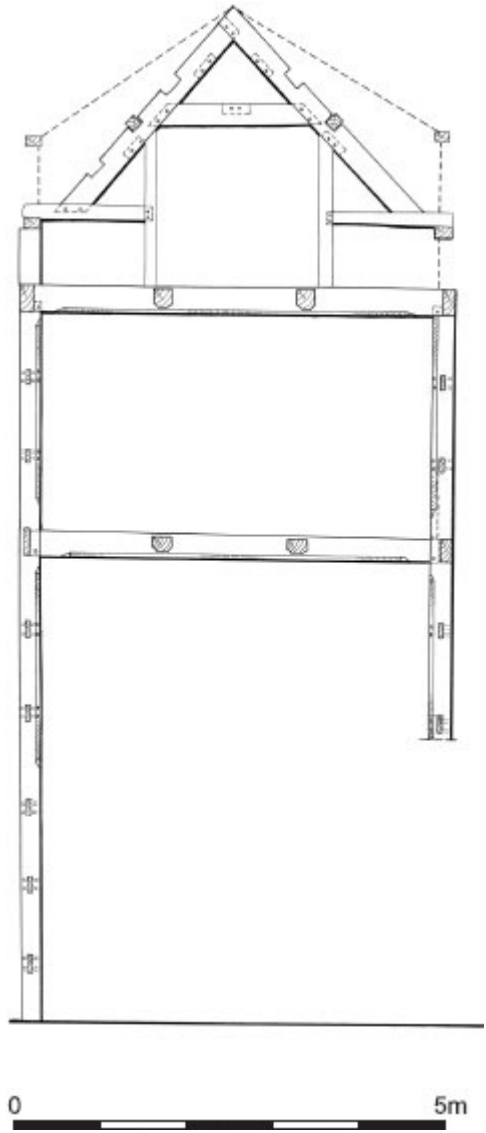


Figure 3.7 Cross-section through the front range of 26 High Town on the line of one of the open cross-frames. Most of the framing remains intact – though the first floor has been removed and the roof structure raised and altered

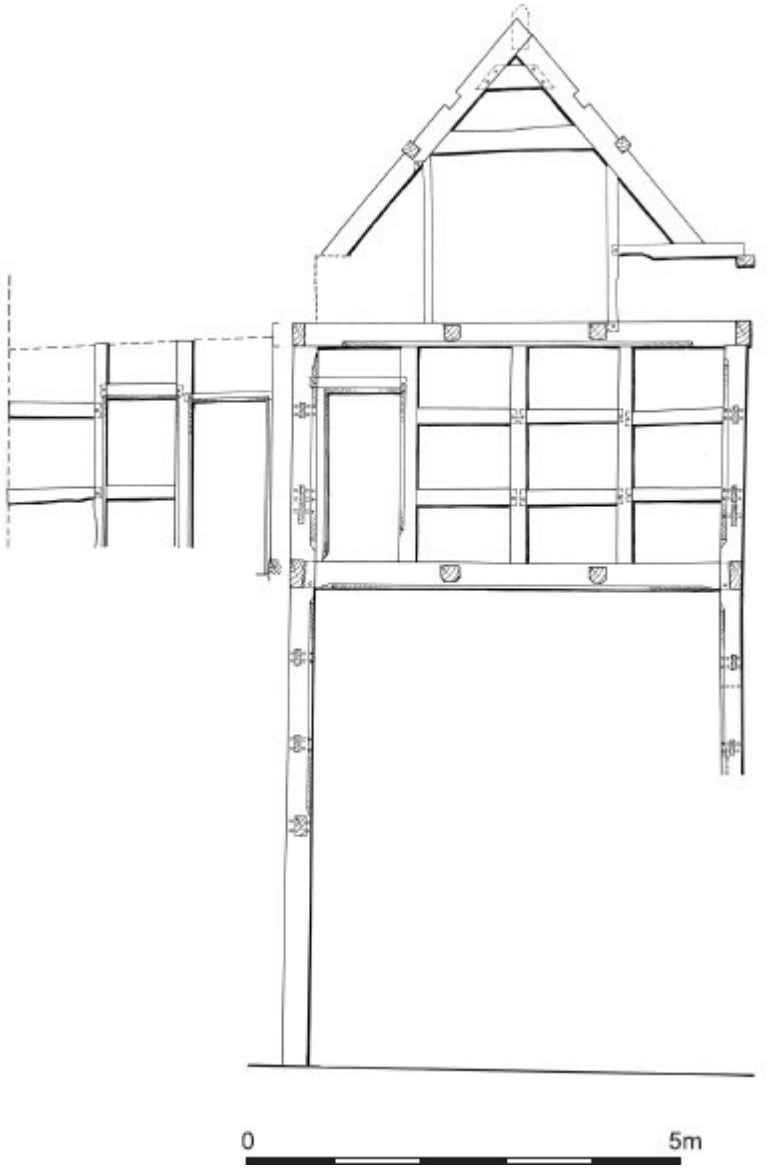


Figure 3.8 The south face of the southern cross-frame of 26 High Town, showing the only partition – on the second floor; this has a primary doorway at the western end. Adjacent to this a small section of the framing of no. 27 is also shown

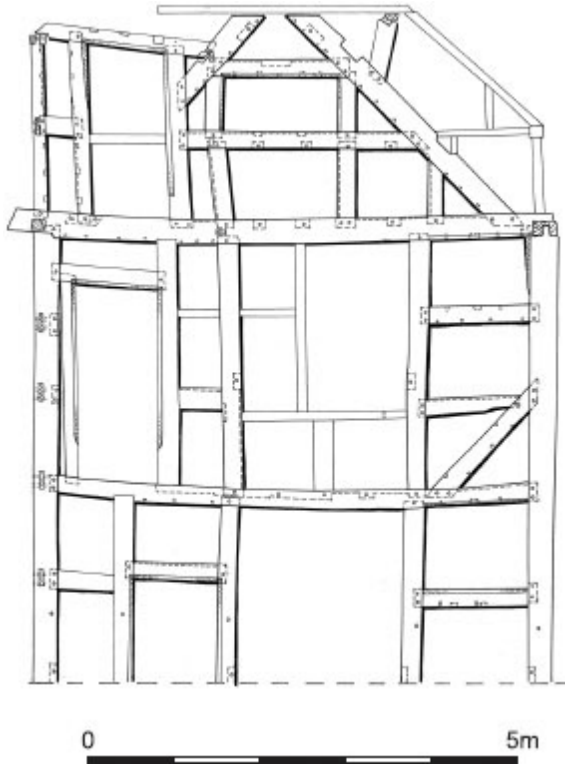


Figure 3.9 The external elevation of the south, rear, gable of the main range of 26 High Town. Most of the present openings are inserted and the raising of the attic structure is quite clear. However, there is evidence to suggest large primary window openings, subsequently infilled, at both first- and second-floor levels

The framing is of simple square panelling, originally infilled with wattle-and-daub. The main intermediate posts are very tall, about 10.5 m long rising from sole-plate to wall-plate, and are substantially thicker than the studs. They project into the interior and are simply chamfered, the chamfers respecting the original floor levels within, as do the second-floor girding beams. The only bracing in the frames consists of short, straight foot-braces from the bay posts to the second-floor girding beams; only one of the bay posts seems to have had a pair of such braces, the rest having single ones instead.

There are no primary openings in the side frames, suggesting that the building was originally in separate occupation to those on either side of it. However, a doorway was subsequently inserted into the southern section of the second-floor framing of the west frame by the simple expedient of removing the lower rail and re-setting the upper rail slightly higher to form its lintel. Probably at the same time a doorway was created at attic level above it; both doorways connected

this building to 27.

Although there is evidence in the southern corner posts of there being a rearward continuation of the western frame, the evidence at the end of the eastern frame is less clear. More significantly, there are indications in the present southern frame of large primary windows on both first- and second-floor levels. Immediately to the east of the suggested first-floor window opening is a probably primary doorway, perhaps associated with a gallery to the south. The doorway at the eastern end of the frame at second-floor level is inserted, as is the one in the raised attic storey.

The roof and associated attics were considerably altered, probably in the 18th century. The building is likely to have had a fairly simple roof structure with collared trusses supporting two tiers of purlins. The southern truss is probably the only one that retains much of its original design, the others being reformed when the attics were raised.

Internally, the floors were supported on bridging beams between the bay posts. Both of the intermediate frames appear to have been open at all three of the main floor levels, suggesting large, three-bay rooms presumably heated by fireplaces in the western stack. The simply moulded ceiling panels of the first-floor rooms may be original. At second-floor level a timber-framed partition appears to have been added on the line of the southern bay frame; this incorporated a doorway which provided access into an inserted passageway along the west side of the building, formed by a timber-framed partition. In this partition an original centrally positioned doorway was replaced by a second one.

The dating evidence suggests an early to mid-17th-century date for this building, which presumably post-dates 27 High Town to the west – though the two buildings were subsequently linked physically by the infilling of the former passageway between them and the creation of doorways through their former side frames into the new link.

The relatively small number of large, probably high-status rooms suggested by the archaeological evidence in the original phase of the building suggests there was likely to have been a service range in the yard area to the rear/south.

Description – 27 High Town (Figs 3.10–3.12)

No. 27 High Town consists of a brick-built frontage block of *c.*1800, three bays wide and of four storeys. At the back of this section is the surviving rear frame of an earlier timber-framed building, probably of late 16th-century date, and behind that is a substantially intact, but altered and extended, slightly later timber-framed structure.

The earlier rear frame of the former front range has been radically

altered but was originally made up of square framing, two rows per storey. In between the full-height corner posts there seems to have been a full-height intermediate post but the framing between the corner posts has been removed at ground-floor level. Evidence of redundant floor-joist mortices on what would have been the second-floor girding beam suggests that the floors were based on single west–east axial beams at each floor level. The range was approximately 7 m long (west–east) and 4.9 m deep. There was a passageway through the eastern side of the ground floor, reflected in the former jetties of the range to the south; when it was built, doorways were cut through this frame. Around 1800, the front range was rebuilt in brick and raised; the new roof is made up of re-used timbers, some probably from the earlier roof.

The range to the south, probably only slightly later in date, was of three storeys and is now of just two bays, though the evidence in the southern end frame suggests that it continued further to the south – or was built up against an existing structure. The building is not rectangular: it is approximately 6.8 m long (north–south) but its north frame is 5.8 m wide and the south frame just 5 m wide. Whilst its end and west side-frames are perpendicular to each other, it is clear that the original eastern frame was built on a diagonal angle – an alignment presumably associated with the passageway through the frontage which then had to pass by a projecting rear building of the adjacent property to the east, no. 26. The angled elevation to the passageway was jettied at both first- and second-floor levels and from the limited surviving evidence was of simple square panelling, two rows high, to each floor level.

At a later date the subsidiary frame members in the upper levels of the northern bay were removed because the gap between this range and 26 High Town was infilled. To the south, large windows were inserted at first-floor level and the second-floor framing was rebuilt – and slightly raised – with re-used timber framing that incorporated a large window. Evidence for ground-floor changes was lost in the early 20th century when the framing was removed and the floors above supported by iron columns.

Figure 3.10 Early 17th-century wainscot with bold floral painting, possibly contemporary, surviving next to the stack on the third floor of the front range of 27 High Town. It is evidently re-set but may have come from elsewhere in the complex. There were some traces of decoration on wattle-and-daub panel infills as well

The west frame survives fairly intact and is of simple square panelling with no evidence of any openings. Much of the ground floor has been lost and replaced in brickwork. There were fragmentary remains of simple floral decoration on the plaster of some of the surviving wattle-and-daub infill panels. There are also cuts in the inner faces of the timbers indicating the position of a staircase of unknown date.

The northern frame is fairly ephemeral and was built up against the existing rear frame of the frontage range. There appear to have been bridging beams only at the main floor levels and the truss. The first-floor bridging rail has since been removed, along with all but the western post of the ground-floor framing, but the second-floor one is chamfered.

The present south frame was also fairly ephemeral and thus not intended to be external, and has been altered – but both bridging beams survive intact. These are chamfered on both sides, suggesting that they spanned rooms that continued southwards. Either such rooms were carefully formed in such a manner to span the gap between this range and another three-storey range to the south, or this range itself once continued further southwards.

Another timber-framed building was situated to the south, considered to have been of mid-16th-century date; this was demolished in 1937. It was described as being a two-bay jettied building of two storeys, later raised by a third storey. It is possible that this predated the surviving range and the raising was part of the general remodelling of the site.

In between the surviving end frames is a former closed cross-frame with a jowled western post. This has lost much of the ground-floor framing but there is sufficient evidence to show that it was of simple large panels, two rows high and infilled with wattle-and-daub. Whilst the ground-floor evidence has gone, there is evidence to show that there were doorways through the eastern ends of the frames on the floors above, with separately jointed lintels. The doorway on the second floor was later repositioned to the west.

Figure 3.11 Awkward junction between the central cross-frame of the southern building in 27 High Town and its remodelled eastern frame, viewed from the south at second-floor level. The cross-frame was jettied at both first and second floor levels

Two trusses of the plain gabled roof survive, the southern one being lost. The trusses are very simple, consisting of tie-beam, principals and a single pair of 'V-braces' between the two, carrying two tiers of trenched purlins and a ridge-piece.

The internal floor structures were based on joists tenoned into single axial beams – though it seems that the second-floor spaces were

open to the apex of the roof. There seem to have been two interconnected rooms on each floor level, separated by the intermediate truss and lit by windows in the jettied elevation overlooking the passageway. From the structural evidence it is not clear if they were heated.

At an unknown date, but possibly sometime in the mid-to late 17th century, the gap between the northern section of this jettied range and the west wall of 26 High Town was infilled above the passageway, which was retained on the ground floor.

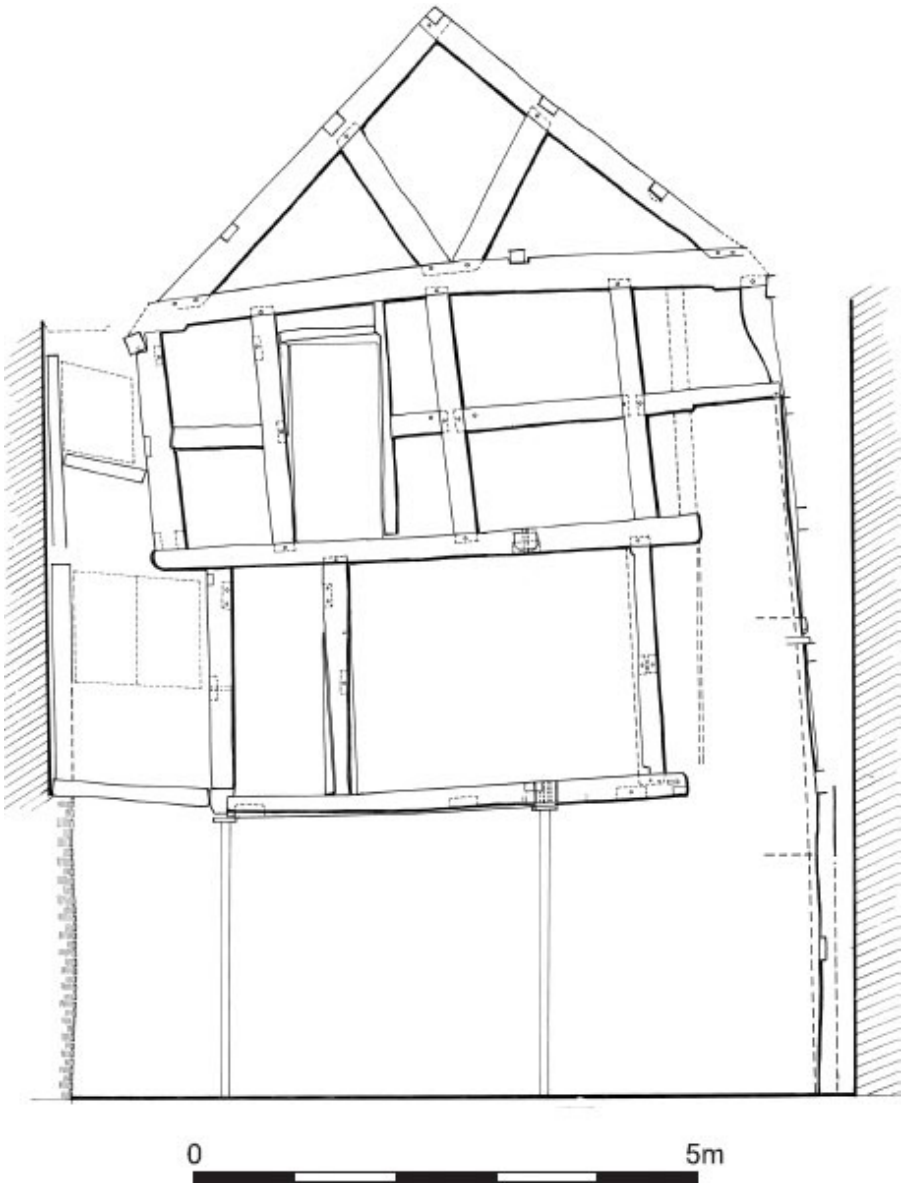


Figure 3.12 The north face of the cross-frame of the southern range of 27 High Town; the range was double-jettied over the intervening passage between it and no. 26 but the gap between the two was later infilled. There were primary doorway openings at the east (or left-hand) side on both upper floor levels – that on the second floor replaced by one further to the centre

Discussion (Fig. 3.13)

The value of the information provided by the documentary sources is particularly striking in this instance. It explains the infilling of the passage between 26 and 27, which can now be seen as part of the creation of the King's Head in the mid-17th century, together with the cutting of a new access through the side frame of 26. The 1706 inventory also shows something of how a large inn at that time was organised and furnished, and allows us a glimpse of what no longer survives, or at least is no longer visible. This includes not just the decorative finishes that gave individual rooms their particular identities, but the service buildings at the rear that have not survived at all, except, perhaps, as buried archaeological remains. Once again, a combination of structural and documentary evidence reveals a process of change to the old medieval plots – in this case the precise opposite of what has been observed at 50a Commercial Street. There, a broad medieval plot was sub-divided after the 16th century to create the narrow properties that were mapped in the 19th century and exist today. At 26–27 High Town, two narrow medieval plots were combined in the course of the 17th century to create a single broad property, albeit one in which the line of the old dividing passageway remains fossilised within the building.

Figure 3.13 Artist's reconstruction of the former alleyway between 26 and 27 High Town in the early 17th century, the latter's jetties being to the left in this view north towards High Town

(10) The Black Lion, Bridge Street (Figs 3.14– 3.16; Plates 18–20)

Introduction

The Black Lion pub stands on the west side of Bridge Street, close to the medieval Wye Bridge. It occupies one of a series of long, strip-type burgages that run back from the Bridge Street frontage, westwards, to the city wall at the rear. The antiquity of the bridge is unknown but the earliest archaeological evidence found so far shows that a bridge was in place on the present site by the late 11th century (see Baker 2010a). The narrow form of the plots on both sides of the Bridge Street reflects the competition for scarce frontage space on this important approach to the city although further north, the late medieval buildings at no. 41a (see p. 51) demonstrate that the present form of the plots need not necessarily directly reflect their medieval configuration. The Black Lion buildings do, however, stand within their containing plot in a way that suggests that its form and extent has not changed since the early 17th century; indeed the complex is a superbly preserved example of an historic burgage, built up with timber-framed buildings for its entire length along its northern side, with yard space alongside to the south.

The frontage is occupied by a two-bay, two-storey timber-framed building, jettied along the frontage with two rooms on each floor. Built probably in the later 16th century, it was raised and altered in the early 17th; there are also signs (a formerly open roof truss at its north end) that it was originally part of a longer range that extended across the frontage of the plot next door. Behind it stands a contemporaneous, maybe slightly later, four-bay, two-storey range extending down the plot. Its eastern bay contains the stack and stairs and, on the first floor, the principal chamber, known as the Commandment Room from the subject matter of the painted scenes that survive around its walls, the finest of their kind in Hereford. Behind and at right-angles to that building stands a third timber-framed range, much rebuilt, of probable early 17th-century origin.

Historical background

There are two main sources for the documentary history of this building: the title deeds in the possession of the owner[8] and the list of those tenants who paid 9d to the Dean and Chapter Common Fund as part of their rent. The small amount may represent an obit – a sum paid out of the tenants' rent to the medieval church for prayers for the dead and perpetuated in post-Reformation times. The two sets of

records complement each other.

The property seems to have been in the hands of the Golofer or Gullopher family (used interchangeably with many variations) for much of the 17th century. In 1679, when the property was finally sold out of the Golofer family, the previous changes in ownership are recited with no explanation. To sum them up, it appears likely that the property was in the hands of John Walter of London, who probably inherited it from a Hereford father or grandfather and sold it, in 1623, to James Golopher, baker. James transferred the house to his brother Walter, a wealthy London merchant, but continued living in the property until 1662 when he transferred it to his son, also James.[9]

Although the 1662 lease, made out when James the son took the property, does not itemise rooms in the house, the list of all the assets is unusually long and includes edifices, buildings, shops, cellars, sollars, rooms, chambers, entries, cots, lights, easements, profits and commodities, suggesting ample accommodation and a good standard of living. The inclusion of 'rooms' and 'chambers' is particularly uncommon and may be significant. It would seem likely that the surviving paintings and plasterwork were carried out in (the father) James Golofer's time and that they were still prized.

From 1667 the house passed to tenants who ran the property as an inn. The name, the Black Lion, was in use by 1676 when the Lawday Court 'presented' for the non-repair of the 'high causeway leading from the Black Lion to St Nicholas Church', while in 1682 Thomas Davies is given as paying 9d for the Black Lyon to the Dean and Chapter Common Fund. During the 18th century the Barroll family owned the inn and leased it to tenants.[10] In 1778, when the inn had passed into the Smith family, the lease was advertised:

…to be sold... a well accustomed Inn … with the garden, stables and Brewhouse in the occupation of Thomas Drew.[11]

The buyer, a publican called James Davies, continued to pay rent to the Dean and Chapter until the records end in 1794. By this time the property had been divided into two, with some of the stabling let to a tenant. An insurance certificate for 1821 states that the inn was built of timber and thatched (with 'and tiled' inserted above as though the predominant effect was of thatch). A later certificate for 1855 states that the property was brick- and stone-built and tiled, while a third insurance document 1882 gives it as brick-built and tiled.

In 1832 the then owner, William Cox, leased the inn to William Morgan. Morgan had to agree to:

repair, paint maintain uphold, amend and keep repaired in a workmanlike manner with good materials the walls, roofs, chimneys, windows, shutters, doors, locks, fastenings, partitions, ceilings, floors, chimney pieces, shelves, pavements, sinks, drains, cisterns, pipes, watercourses.[12]

The inclusion of ceilings and chimney pieces in such a list is unusual and may reflect a rare early appreciation of the decorative features of the building.

In about 1892 the building was bought by the brewery firm Godsell & Son and in 1910 the plaster was stripped off the front, exposing the timber framing. The original entrance passage was infilled to provide a new bar, after the building to the south, acquired during the late 19th century, had been demolished to provide access to the rear yard. The plaster on the front wall and gables was later reinstated. In 1924 the rear part of the passage was built up to form a lobby and a new beer store was added. Further work in 1932 exposed the paintings in the 'Commandment Room', and in 1949 extensive alterations were made to the internal spaces: partitions were removed and new toilets obscured traces of early building at the rear. These changes can be traced and documented from surviving plans and descriptions.

Description

The individual buildings making up the Black Lion still give a splendid impression of how congested such narrow burgages could be as the pressure on available floor-space increased. The Black Lion is built up the whole length of its plot, from the street to the inside of the city wall, and on the north elevation these individual buildings are all timber-framed.

Despite radical changes earlier this century, and Georgian gentrification, most of the buildings on the site date from the years around 1600. The Royal Commission thought that there were remains of an earlier stone building, but these are somewhat ambiguous (RCHM 1931, 136–7, monument 53). Stonework is visible in the north-west corner of the front range but could simply be part of the large stack. Nevertheless, there is some evidence in the roof-space of the frontage block to indicate either the possibility of an earlier timber-frame fossilised within the later ones, or reuse of older materials.

The Black Lion is a confusing building because of the many changes made to it, the hiding of much of the fabric beneath decorative finishes, and the fact that it is yet to be fully surveyed and analysed. Most of the component buildings have their north walls on the

northern boundary of the plot, and until the demolition of the adjacent buildings to the south, there would have been room for only a very narrow yard. Until this century the entrance into the yard was through the (now demolished) southern end of the frontage block.

There are four main timber-framed components making up an elongated 'half-H' plan at right-angles to the street. To the east is the main frontage block, and to the west, a projecting wing; in between is a long link block and an infill range in the angle between it and the frontage block. To the west of this main part of the inn are long outhouses, four in line, while others at the western end of the property form lean-tos against the city wall. Those built up against the northern boundary have retained their timber-framed north walls but their south walls have been rebuilt in early 20th-century brick.

The frontage block

The frontage block was raised and altered considerably in the early 17th century. It appears to have been a two-bay, two-storey structure originally, parallel to the street and about 9.6 m long and 5.5 m deep. On the street frontage its first floor was jettied. The basic framing of this elevation appears to have been of tall rectangular panels, two to each storey. In the centre of each bay was a primary window opening, each flanked by two-light 'frieze windows'.

Two of the original roof trusses may survive in the present roof space. Both have a low collar and a pair of queen struts. The north end truss, oddly, seems to have been open, with no evidence for wattle-and-daub infilling, whilst the intermediate truss is now closed and contains an inserted framed doorway. The northern truss has deep cuts in its principal rafters suggesting two tiers of trenched purlins. These are matched in the intermediate truss, though the upper pair in this truss do not cut across the whole width of the rafter. The lower 'trenches' are very low indeed and it is possible that they represent the cutting out of original mortices for windbraces. No purlins are *in situ*, and the upper purlins, and probably the ridge, are later alterations associated with the raising of the range. In the top of the east wall-plate there is a series of cuts that, unless designed to take rafter feet, are otherwise inexplicable.

Figure 3.14 The southern end of Bridge Street. Location plan for Buildings 10 and 14, based on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1886

Figure 3.15 The Black Lion from the north-east, c.1990, giving some idea of the attenuated plan form of the complex and its narrow burgage, with timber-framed structures extending the entire length of the plot back to the city wall

Within the building there appear to have been two rooms on each floor with a framed partition between them. The northern rooms were probably heated by the existing stone stack, now shared between rooms in this range and the one to the west. The fireplace in the present first-floor room has a timber lintel with a depressed four-centred head, the chamfer of which continues down the stone jambs.

It is difficult to provide a specific date for the first phase of this range, though one in the mid to late 16th century seems likely. It appears not to have been a very old building when it was first raised. The raising meant that most of the roof structure was removed, though presumably many of its timbers were re-used. Two new tall dormer gables were added on the street frontage, one to each bay. These are not quite identical: both have a single tier of panels between the old wall-plate and their truss tie, but there are six panels in that beneath the south dormer and seven below the north. The framing in the south dormer respects the earlier framing below, whilst that in the north gable does not. The dormer trusses have a single collar, from which a pair of curving braces rises to the principals. These are protected by restored decorative bargeboards with a pendant at the apex.

Structurally these dormer gables have wall and valley plates crudely jointed to the rafters of the original trusses. They each have a pair of plain purlins, and the inward ends of these are supported on raised purlins between the trusses, close to their apex; the tops of the dormers are higher than the original ridge of the roof. The general design of the dormer gables is similar to those of the former Farmers' Club on Widemarsh Street (see p. 123), though not jettied. The raising is probably of similar early 17th-century date.

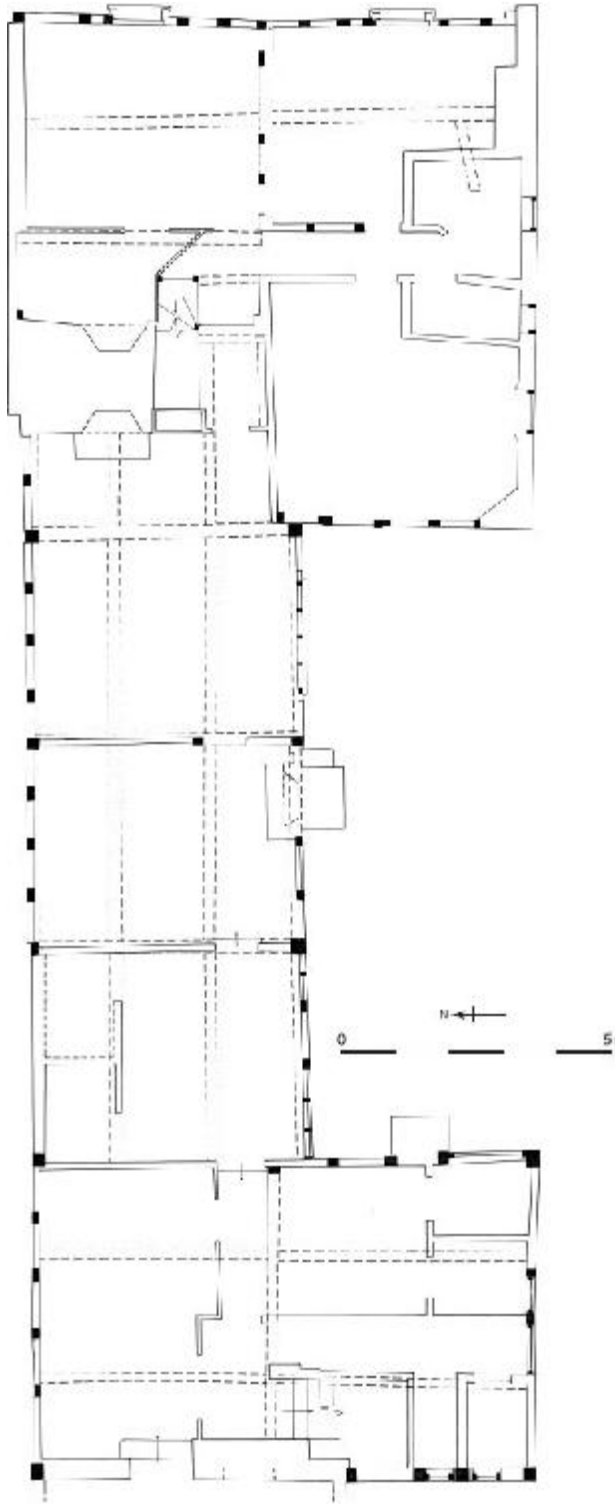


Figure 3.16 The ground-floor plan of the Black Lion. The street is at the top (north to left). The frontage block is represented by the two cells along the street. The central range

lies behind these, running east–west with the stack in the easternmost of its four bays; this and the next bay contain the Commandment Room. The two bays of the west wing lie behind, arranged north–south

The central range

The central range is four bays long, of two storeys with attics under a plain gabled roof; it was probably built at the same time as the west wing. The eastern bay has, within its eastern half, the main stack (to the north) and the present stairs (to the south). This bay butts against the rear (west) wall of the front range.

Its framing is visible on both long elevations and is of plain square panels, originally two tiers to each storey. Most of the ground-floor framing has been removed and the rest is mainly brick-nogged. On the first floor the studs are storey high, interrupting the mid-rails. The bay posts have plain gun-stock jowls on their inner faces to support the ends of the truss tie-beams.

There are no indications of any primary window openings in the north frame, which would have butted against the next property. However, there is a complete absence of framing in the west bay in this elevation. The gap between the bay-posts is infilled with brick but there are no indications that this was ever framed; there are no redundant mortices or peg-holes to indicate the former existence of rails. The wall-plate, however, continues across this gap. As there is framing on the south elevation, this would not have been a drive-through – and it would have been an odd site for one anyway. It is possible that the absence of framing marks the former position of a very large stack, perhaps one associated with brewing or malting.

The ground floor has been considerably altered over the years and partitions added or taken away as the needs of the inn have altered. The first- and attic-floor frames are based on pairs of chamfered axial beams; common joists run between these and the wall-plates.

On the first floor, the room divisions seem to be primary, apart from minor additional partitions in the west bay. The two western cross-frames are partition frames, creating a single room in each bay. The two eastern bays form one larger space, but had to accommodate both a large stack and the stairs. For this reason the bridging beam in its ceiling is not central to the body of the room. This room is the grandest room in the building, and one of the finest in Hereford (Plates 18–20). It is lit by a large but fairly modern window in the south wall; this must always have been where the window(s) to the room were situated. The room's axial ceiling beams are richly moulded and the panels between the timbers are richly decorated in plasterwork, including an enriched oval feature with foliage, vases

and a cherub.

The fireplace has a timber lintel with a depressed four-centred head cut into its soffit. This is boldly chamfered and the chamfer is continued down the stone jambs on either side. The fireplace is thus very similar to that in the opposite flank of the stack at this level, heating the room within the frontage block.

The overmantle is a rich composition in bold relief plasterwork. The principal motif is of four arcaded bays, with foliage on their columns and decorated arches, separated by stylised female heads and torsos placed on tapering pilasters. Above and below the arcade are running floral motifs, the upper one apparently of vine leaf and grapes, the lower, smaller in scale, of grapes, sunflowers, Tudor roses and an unidentified flower or fruit.

This is one of the finest pieces of plasterwork to survive in the city but the real glory of the room lies in the wall-paintings rediscovered in 1932. These occupy the space above the wainscot on the north and south walls. Those on the north wall depict the breaking of the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th commandments, whilst part of the 9th and all of the 10th are on the south wall. It is assumed that the first three commandments were on the west wall and that the 8th was probably towards the east end of the south wall. It, and the other part of the 9th, may have been destroyed when changes were made to this part of the building. These wall-paintings are a remarkable *in situ* survival of their type but, despite efforts in the past, are still in need of renovation and long-term consolidation. They probably date to the late 16th or early 17th century and thus help to date the structure. Since the rediscovery of the paintings this has generally been known as the Commandment Room.

The two rooms occupying the bays to the west are fairly similar; both have plain-chamfered pairs of axial ceiling beams. The main difference between the two is the external brick stack in the south wall of the eastern one, of unknown date but probably not primary.

The roof structure is fairly simple, although its junctions with the ranges at either end have been modified and are rather confusing. This roof had no closed trusses at either end and was accessible from the adjoining roof spaces. The intermediate trusses are of the same basic pattern, consisting simply of tie-beams, principals, a high collar and widely spaced pairs of vertical struts from tie to principals. The westernmost truss is of the same basic form, but its struts are slightly splayed, allowing even easier access into the adjacent roof space. The trusses support a single tier of trenched purlins. Most of the common rafters appear to be primary, and there are no indications of any

dormer gables to light the attic space.

The attic was open from end to end, and unlit. Its original function is unknown, but it appears not to have been domestic. It is possible that it was a malting floor connected with a brewhouse, which may in turn support the idea that the gap in the west bay of the north frame was associated with a large brick flue.

The date of this range can only be placed in a broad late 16th- to early 17th-century bracket, despite the evidence of the paintings and overmantle. Either or both of these features could have been added as part of the redecoration of an earlier building. The overmantle appears to be of early 17th-century date, but the fireplace lintel could be earlier. The paintings have been variously dated to the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

There is some evidence to indicate that this wing was built at the same time as the first phase of the frontage block. The similarities between the first-floor fireplaces in each building have been noted, and they also share the same wall-plate height. Although its timbers are hidden, it does seem that the central range begins at the original west wall of the frontage block. If this is the case, its final eastern bay, containing the stack, would be of the same length as the other three. In addition, the basic floor structure, relying on a pair of axial beams, is the same in each range.

The west wing

The west (rear) wing of the main part of the complex has been considerably altered. The evidence of its northern frame and roof structure suggests that it was originally built at the same time as the central wing – but everything else suggests otherwise, apart from the use of twin axial floor beams. The range was built at right-angles to the central range and butted against its west gable. When first built it would have completely blocked the long narrow yard to the south of the main buildings, and its ground floor was probably open to allow access through. The ground-floor timbers have clearly been renewed and the west gable, now exposed to view but formerly virtually butting against a building to the south, is of late 17th or early 18th-century form, with very thin scantling timbers making up large panels infilled with probably primary brick-nogging. The upper side-walls are similar, but there are traces of earlier and more substantial framing. All in all, this range probably has early 17th-century origins but it has been radically rebuilt, particularly in the section that projects into the inn yard.

The stable ranges

To the west of the main part of the inn are the low, narrow stable ranges, originally timber-framed but virtually rebuilt earlier this century when their south frames were replaced in brick and the roofs replaced by a modern steel structure for the accommodation of a skittle alley on the first floor.

Discussion

The Black Lion is a remarkable survival on two counts. The first concerns the overall form of the site: a classic main-street burgage, long and narrow, backing onto the city wall, the entire length of the plot occupied by timber-framed buildings of the 16th and 17th centuries; nowhere else in the city is the coverage of the plot almost 100% pre-Georgian. More remarkable still is the survival of the decorative features of the Commandment Room; the rare and fortuitous survival of the paint schemes on the walls and the plasterwork of the overmantle give at least some insight into the decoration of a high-status early 17th-century room, even though the colours have, necessarily, faded. The documentary evidence shows that the room was probably part of a private house and the decorative scheme may have been commissioned by the Golofer family sometime after they took possession in 1623. Only after the family left in 1667 did the property become an inn.

Subsequent changes were associated with its new role, which would have led to the development of extensive stabling in the rear yard and general improvements and updating of the buildings from time to time as fashions changed. The timber-framed facade to Bridge Street was rendered, perhaps around 1800, the framing being exposed again and restored in the early 20th century. One interesting snippet from the documents is the fact that some of the buildings were still thatched as late as 1821 – another unusual survival within the city.

(11) 14 Church Street (Figs 3.17–3.27; 3.38; Plate 21)

Introduction

On the east side of Church Street, a short distance north of no. 20 (see Building 3), is the recently restored, rendered facade of no. 14 (Plate 21). Having been a cobbler's, by the early 1990s the building was in poor condition and covered in plywood. This did nothing to help the building's damp problems and had to be removed, exposing an almost entire, rare, close-studded timber frame (Fig. 3.17). The City Council

funded an emergency survey of the street elevation and, as part of this study, additional surveys were made of parts of the rear buildings, though internal examination was necessarily limited because of their poor condition at the time. Thus only the northern frames, facing onto the passage running down the side of the property, could be surveyed safely. Nevertheless, enough evidence was gathered to show that the plot was built up in three stages over a short period of time from the later 16th century. The frontage came first, leased by 1589. Dendrochronology shows that the block behind was built up against it in 1595, to be followed after a short interval by the rearmost block. Owing to the constraints on internal access at the time of the survey, our understanding of floor-plans and room-uses is limited, but the probability is that there was a shop on the frontage with chambers over, the principal accommodation was in the 1595 block behind, and services were located in the rearmost building.

No. 14 occupies one of a series of short plots fronting Church Street and terminating at the rear against one of the side boundaries of the former Conservative Club property (see below, Building 19) facing north onto East Street (see Fig. 3.38). While it is the only clearly timber-framed building amongst its neighbours, it is probable that inspection of the interiors of the ostensibly Georgian brick buildings around it would disclose more early fabric. Restored *c.*2010, 14 Church Street has been returned to retail use on the frontage, with flats in the ranges to the rear.

Historical background

This was one of the houses belonging to the Dean and Chapter from which the rent went into the Fabric Fund towards the maintenance of the cathedral building. There are therefore two main sources of documentary evidence: the run of deeds relating to the property, and the account books of the Fabric Fund, which contribute the first tenants. In 1566 the house passed from Catherine Morgan also Fletcher, widow to John Hall (plumber),[13] while in October 1589 a lease was made out to John Aston, taylor, of the house and garden in Brode Cabbage Lane, formerly John Hall. The lease was confirmed two years later.[14]

The first of the deeds is dated 1628 and refers to Sybil Aston, who held a house or tenement with garden adjoining in Broad Cabbage Lane. The second is a lease dated to 1667 and refers to Elizabeth Aston, stating that she paid 26s to the ‘church houses’. The next, in 1693, is made out to Mary Aston or her under-tenant. The likelihood is that the house was sublet, probably throughout the 17th century and certainly in 1669 when no member of the Aston family features in

the list for Church Street as paying 'Church Poor rate' in St John's parish.[15]

By the end of the 17th century no. 14 must have needed renovation. In 1702, when Herbert Traunter, under-tenant and assignee of Mary Aston, renegotiated the lease, he was charged to rebuild the house at his own proper costs and charges. When the next lease was made out, to Elizabeth, Herbert's widow, it stated that one part of the house or tenement and garden was, since the granting of the said lease, assigned by Herbert Traunter to John Hunyard of Hereford, cutler, now deceased and 'hath been lately by him John Hunyard and Ruth his relict and Unic Hunyard, rebuilt or repaired and divided and the other part of the said house or tenement hath been rebuilt and divided by Herbert Traunter and Elizabeth', and was now in the possession of the said Elizabeth. The yearly rent had been halved to 13s 4d. It seems obvious that the house had been subdivided and one half leased to the Hunyard family.

The Fabric Fund accounts confirm and clarify the story. First, they show that the Hunyards, who were already living elsewhere in Church Street, had rented the whole of the property from the Astons in 1690, but when the Astons' lease was surrendered and sold to Herbert Traunter, they took over part of the site, rebuilding their half of the property and paying half the rent. In 1708 Richard Wadeley paid £1 6s 8d for his house on the corner of Church Street and East Street, Widow Traunter is shown as paying 13s 4d for her dwelling, 'next to it', and Unis Hunyard the same amount 'for her house next to it', that is, next to Traunters'.[16] Effectively the house became two semis, each fronting Church Street. From this time the deeds in this series only relate to the one house, that in the Traunter inheritance, on the north side. The Hunyard family deeds, extant from 1729, give the descent of the house on the south.[17]

In 1718, the Dean and Chapter made out a further lease to Thomas Traunter, son of Elizabeth. The house was now sublet to John Palmer, flaxdresser; John and his son continued to live in the house as sub-tenants until John's son Herbert, a shoemaker, was assigned the lease by the Dean and Chapter in 1770. In the meantime, the holders of the lease appear to have been property owners who regarded the house as an investment. One of them was Arnold Russell, attorney to the Dean and Chapter. The next occupant, Thomas Maddy, who moved from All Saints parish in 1779, was a currier, as was his successor in 1801, John Pritchard Mills; the latter was still there when the records end in 1810.

The house to the south, on the other hand, descended in the

Hunyard family until 1774, when it became the property of William Jackson, a confectioner, who took over the lease from the Hunyards and remained as tenant until 1810. From the beginning of the 18th century, therefore, the two houses were tenanted by small shopkeepers, sometimes as owners of the lease, sometimes as sub-tenants.

Description

The main complex is made up of three buildings. The front building is difficult to appreciate because of external cladding and the decorative finishes within at the time of the survey, but its facade is significant. Close-studding does not occur very often in the surviving timber-framed buildings of Hereford, and this is one of the most lavish.

The building is, or was, of two-and-a-half storeys and two bays, under a roof aligned parallel to the street. The first floor is jettied and the bressumer survives above the later brick underbuild; it was originally supported by brackets on the bay posts. At first-floor level the close-studding had a mid-rail, which served as the sill for two large windows, one in each bay. These are flanked by storey-high studs that interrupt the mid-rail, all of the other studs being tenoned into it. On either side of the large windows were smaller, two-light 'frieze' windows. Although a feature often found in other timber-framed towns, such as Shrewsbury and Worcester, it is very rare in Hereford (see the Black Lion, above).

One unusual aspect of the upper framing is the double-flared jowl of the bay post. Neither of the corner posts are jowled, but the central bay post has a very distinct jowl on either side. Above each bay was a jettied gable-truss. This was a purely architectural feature, bearing in mind that the tie of the truss cuts through the second-floor half-storey. The trusses are closestudded with a single collar forming the lintel of the second-floor windows. Above the collar is a pair of 'V-braces' and it is likely that the gables were originally finished off with decorative bargeboards.

The ground floor now has a 20th-century shop-front and it is difficult to recreate its original framing. It could not have been symmetrical because of the need to accommodate a primary passageway through the north side of the building, leading to the yard behind.

The passage continues past the two rear buildings. The first of these is almost the full width of the curtilage and its first floor is jettied over the passage. It is a two-bay timber-framed building of two-and-a-half storeys. Most of the jettied north frame has been altered by the insertion of large windows at ground- and first-floor level, the former

being to light a workshop. Only the framing of the second half-storey is intact, and this is closestudded, interrupted, at the visible east corner, by a straight up-brace from the corner post. Evidence on the visible section of the northeastern return indicates that the east gable frame was of square panelling, with two rows of panels on each of the main floors and a single row at second-floor level. The corner posts have slightly flared jowls.

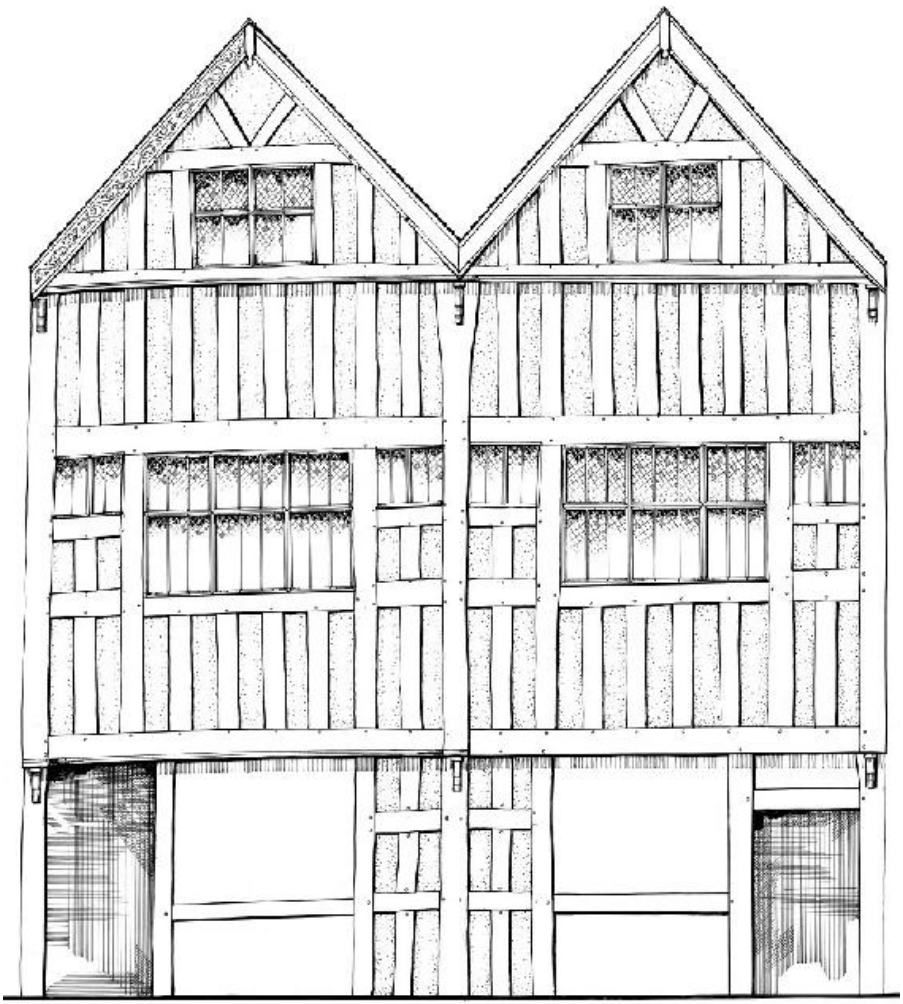


Figure 3.17 Reconstruction of the front elevation of 14 Church Street based on the available archaeological evidence; the doorway to the left leads into a passage down the plot to the rear ranges. The lavish use of close-studding is an unusual survival in the city, but today it has once again been concealed behind render

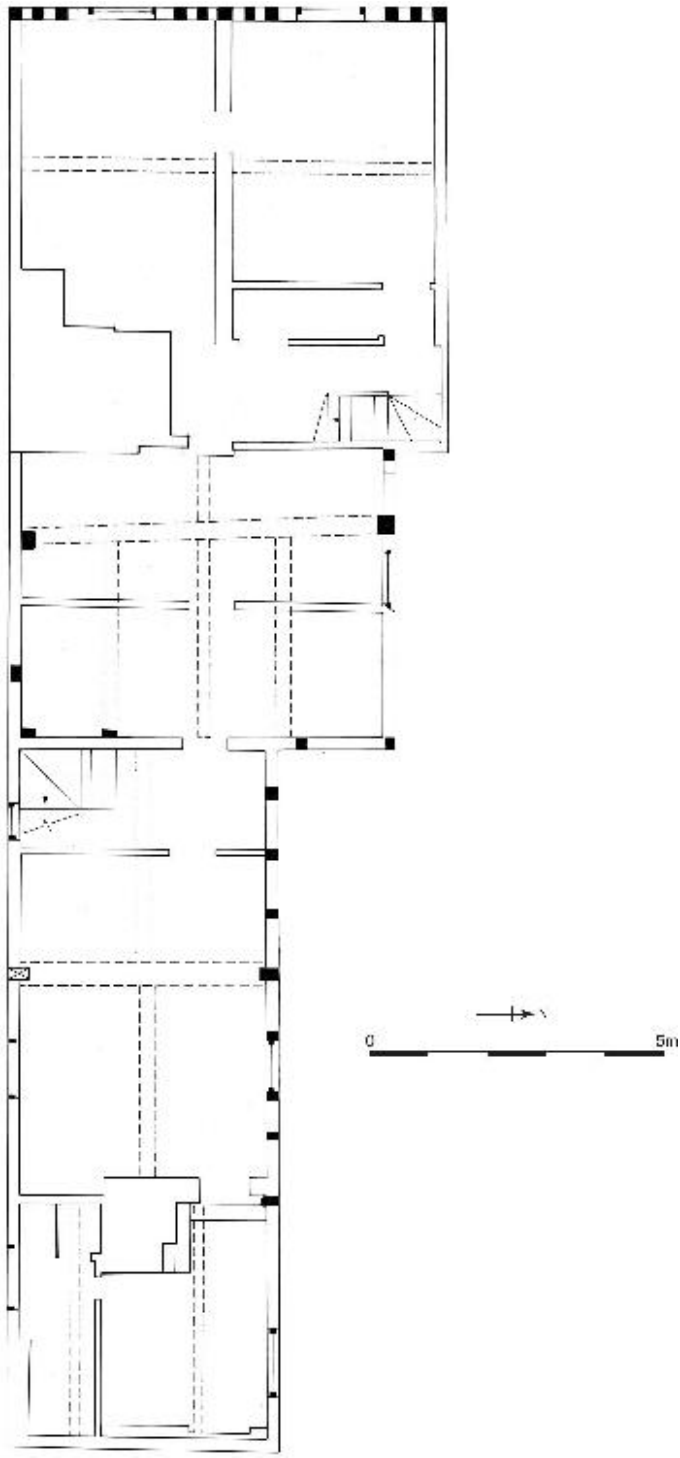


Figure 3.18 The ground-floor plan of 14 Church Street, clearly showing its three component buildings; the street is to the top of the plan (north to right)

Figure 3.19 The jettied north side of the central range of 14 Church Street prior to renovation. The passageway through the front range leads out onto Church Street

The jetty construction is apparent at the north-east corner and is a little unusual in its design. The general assembly is straightforward. The ground-floor storey-post takes the ground-floor frame's top plate. That, in turn, is over-sailed by the first-floor girding-beam of the east frame which then takes the end of the jettied first-floor frame's bressumer. The bressumer is ovolo-moulded and of L-shaped section, the base of the L being open-tenoned into a slot in the end of the

girding beam. The post of the jettied frame is then tenoned into the top of the bressumer in the standard way.

The east gable truss originally consisted of three queen struts between the tie-beam and collar, above which a pair of raking struts rises to the principals. There was originally a single pair of trenched purlins, though oddly, the northern purlin was above the level of the collar whilst the southern one was apparently below it. The present purlins seem to be of a later period.

At a later date the tie-beam was cut towards its southern end to allow the insertion of a new doorway through to the adjacent building. One of the new door jambs is a re-used purlin, dated by tree-ring analysis to 1595, the same date as the rest of the range (Tyers 1996). This suggests that, although the eastern building was built at a slightly later date than the central one, this opening between the two was inserted later still.

At the opposite end of the building the truss design appears to have been virtually open, though it is now infilled with studding. The tie is interrupted not far from the ends of the truss by two posts rising from the second-floor girding beam to, on one side, the principal immediately under its junction with the collar, and, on the other, under both collar and principal. The former joint is pegged, the latter is not. To add rigidity to the arrangement there is, on either side, a short straight up-brace from the corner posts to the stubs of the tie-beam. All of this work appears to be primary and the dendrochronological sampling demonstrated that the tie, posts, braces and north principal rafter are of one period.

Figure 3.20 Elevation of the much-altered northern jettied side frame of the central block of 14 Church Street prior to renovation

It is possible that the width of the opening through the frame has been increased, and this could have been done quite easily. The existence of the braces in this frame, not present in the opposing east frame, suggests that a wide opening was part of the original design. This would indicate that this building abutted an existing one – thereby suggesting part of the sequence of events in the development of the plot.

The design of the eastern rear building is similar to that of the central one except that it is a narrower structure and not jettied. It is also of two bays and of two-and-a-half storeys, the rails of its upper storeys being at the same height as those of the central building. Only the north frame was easy to assess. At ground-floor level much of this frame had been replaced in brick, incorporating a sash window. Towards the western end, however, part of the original framing survives. It is supported by a low stone plinth and there are two rows of square panels. In the post adjacent to the later doorway there are peg-holes to indicate the position of a former lintel, demonstrating that the present doorway is in the position of an original one.

There have been alterations to the first-floor framing that include

the addition of another sash window above the one on the ground floor. Nevertheless, the original pattern is fairly easy to make out. There are two tall rows of panels to this storey and four panels per bay. In each, the mid-rail is dropped slightly in the middle two panels and it is evident that this marks the position of two large, primary, window openings, both of which were subsequently taken out and infilled. The framing of the second floor, a half-storey, consists of a single row of square panels.

This range was built up against the central range and has no west gable frame of its own. Its own east gable frame is largely obscured except from within the rather dangerous (at the time of the survey) second-floor space. It is possible to see from here that the single row of panels at this level continued around the gable end. The truss was a simple one, of two queen struts rising from the tie to a collar. The rafters were supported by a single tier of trenched purlins; the ridge-piece is a later addition.

Figure 3.21 The north side of the rear range of 14 Church Street from the north-east, with the projecting corner of the central range in the background. This range was not jettied, but its framing is otherwise quite similar

Discussion

Dating this complex by stylistic features alone could only give a fairly broad, late 16th- to early 17th-century date. It does appear that the three main timber-framed buildings were built during this period and all are of similar design, with half-storey second floors and, in the case of the two western ranges, first-floor jetties. There are surviving

primary fireplaces and traces of wall-paintings.

The central building to the rear, dated by the tree-ring analysis to *c.*1595 (Tyers 1996), butted against an already existing structure at its western gable and had a later building added against its own east gable. It thus suggests a simple front-to-back developmental sequence. In the late 16th century a new close-studded frontage block was built on Church Street. It seems unlikely that this was the one standing in 1566 but was probably the building leased by John Aston in 1589. In 1595, or very shortly afterwards, a second range was built to its rear. Shortly after that, a third range – of similar design – was added at the rear of the property. Like the Black Lion on Bridge Street, this is a good, complete surviving example of the progressive building-up of a plot in the early modern period – in this case over a very short period of time, perhaps within a generation. The frontage block presumably contained chambers over shops, the middle range the main living quarters, and the rear range possibly the services. The most unusual aspect of the design is the survival of good-quality close-studding on the frontage elevation – once commonplace in Hereford, but now a comparative rarity.

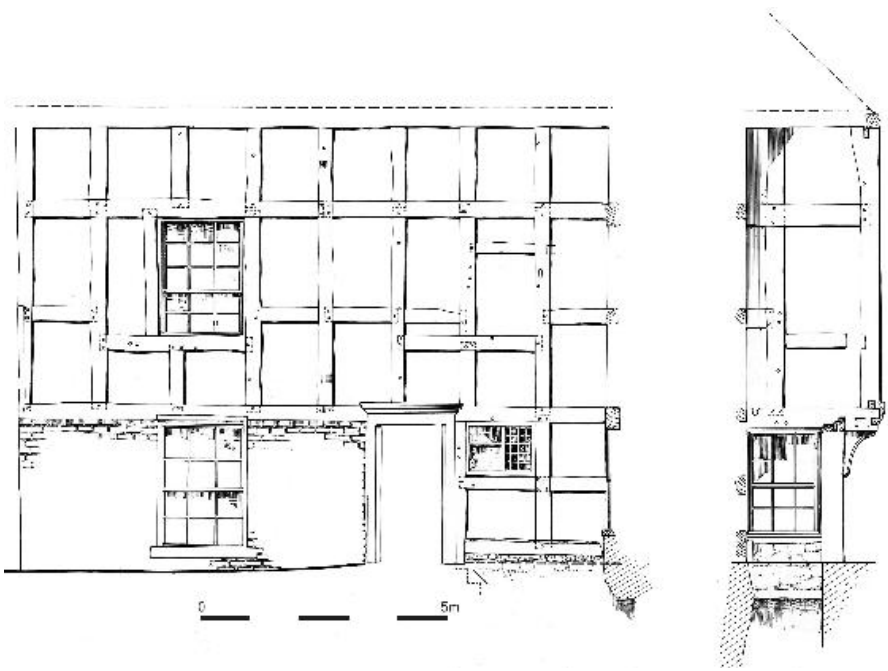


Figure 3.22 Elevation of the northern side frame of the rearmost range of 14 Church Street; there are indications of two large primary window openings on the first floor, subsequently altered; the ground floor has been more radically altered

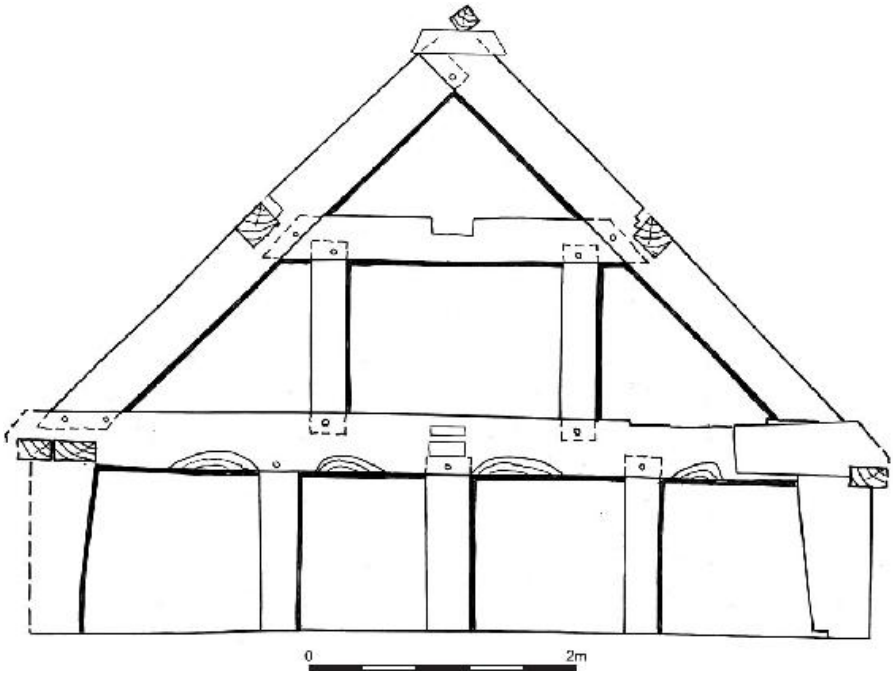


Figure 3.23 The plain gable trusses of the frontage block of 14 Church Street contrasted with the more decorative dormer gables to the street

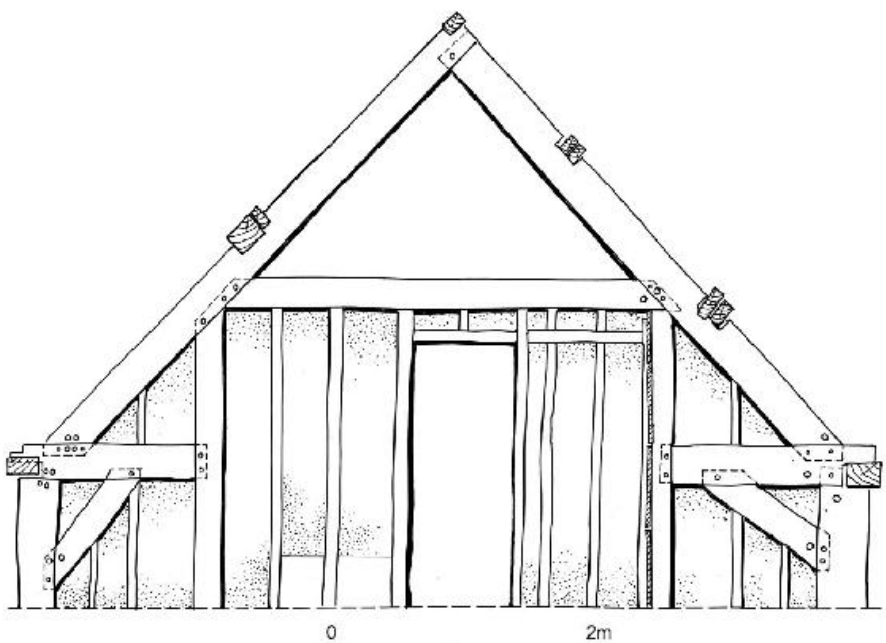


Figure 3.24 Although later infilled, the top of the western frame of the central range of 14 Church Street appears to have incorporated a very broad opening to maximize ease of access through it. While the opening could have been widened, the carpentry suggests that the interrupted-tie design is primary

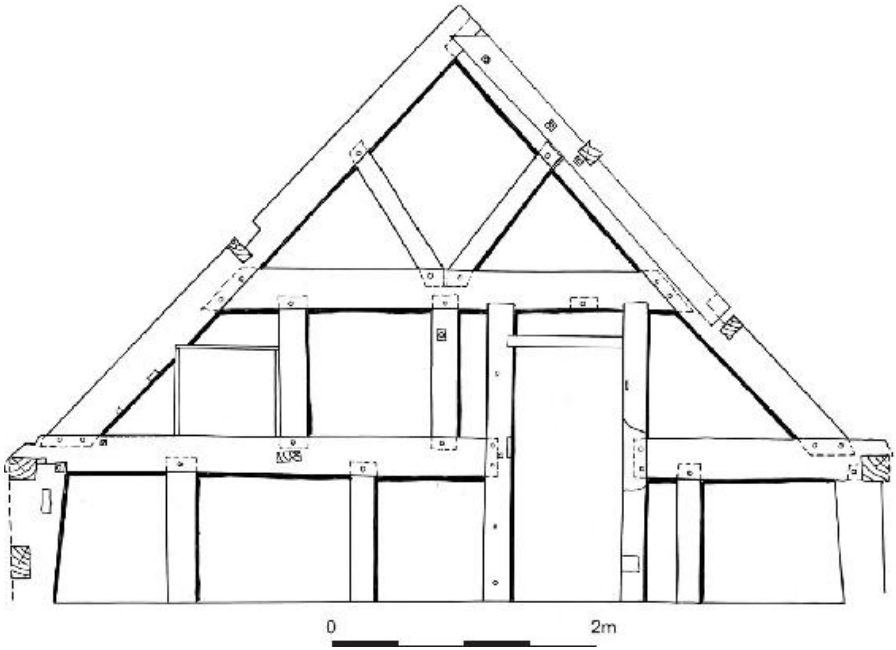


Figure 3.25 The central range of 14 Church Street: the west face of the top of the east gable-frame and its truss. The asymmetry of the original purlin positions is a little unusual but the inserted doorway is quite obvious

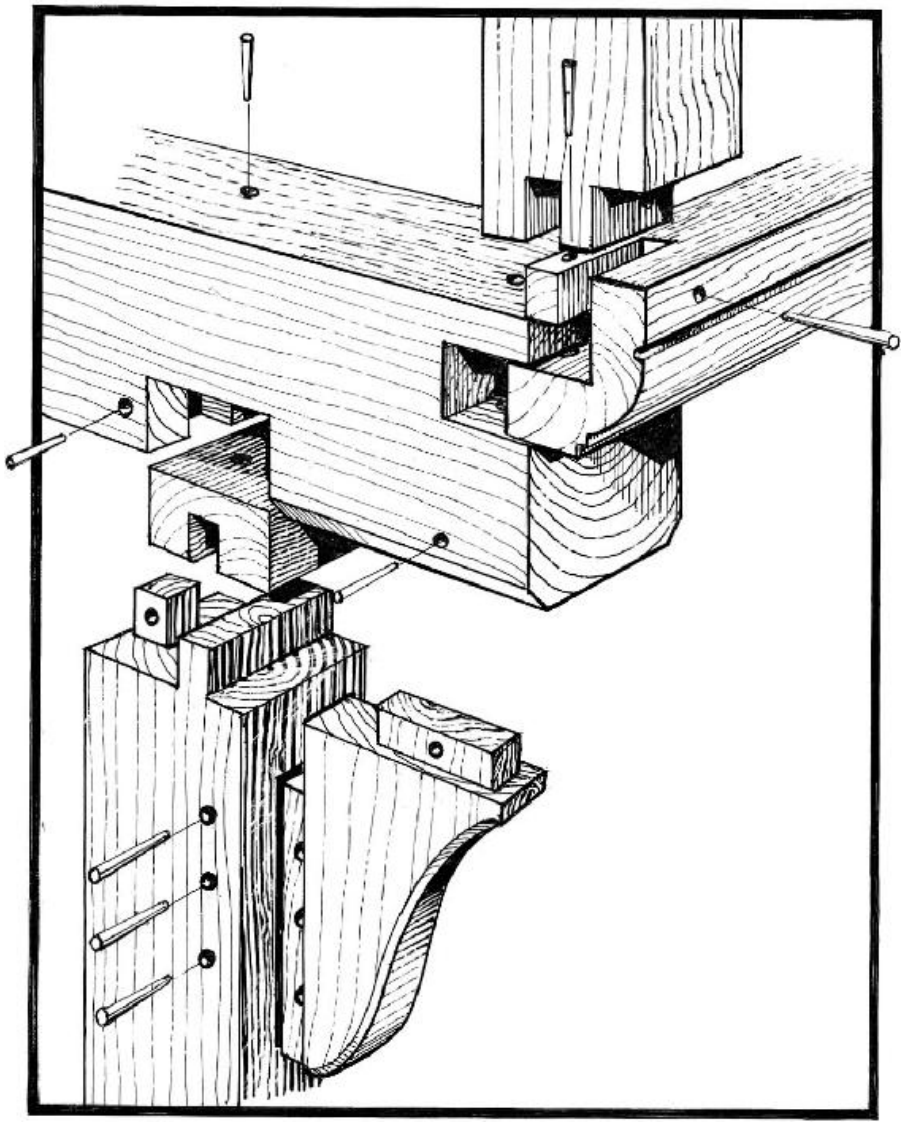


Figure 3.26 Exploded detail of the construction of the jetty of the central range of 14 Church Street, showing the 'L-section' bressumer (right)

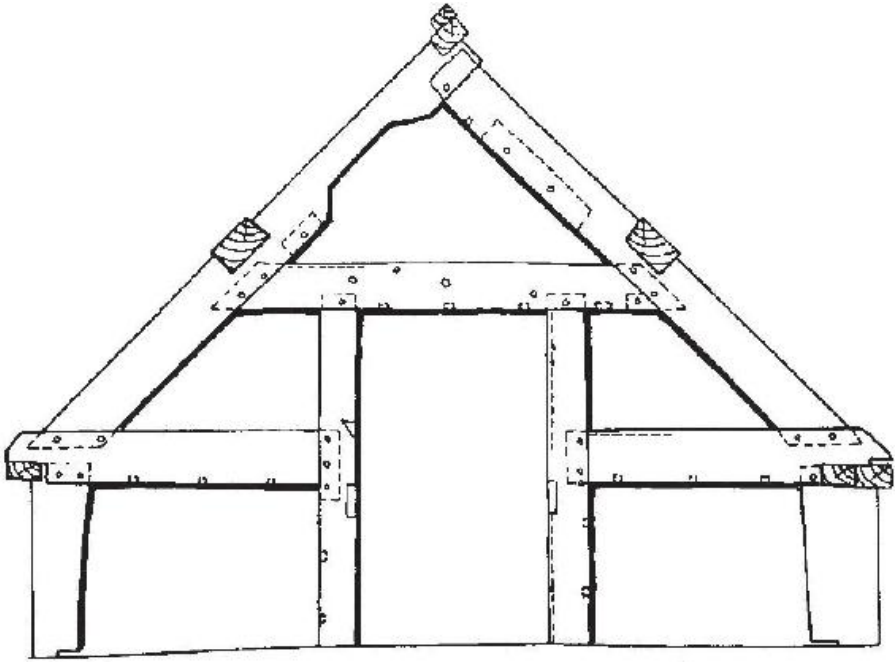


Figure 3.27 The intermediate truss of the rear range of 14 Church Street is a typical attic truss with interrupted tie-beam to allow easy access through it; the principal rafters are evidently re-used but the rest of the timbers appear to be purpose-cut

In the early 18th century there was a major campaign of refurbishment, resulting in rather grand interiors, including a fine wainscoted room. Repairs were needed by 1702 and probably included a general modernisation of the facade; it was at this time that the property was divided longitudinally into two separate dwellings. In the later 18th century the front was raised in studwork and the upper half-storey was converted into a full one.

(12) 25 Commercial Street (Figs 2.40, 3.28–3.30)

Introduction

Commercial Street, the former Bye or Bishop's Street, was the main road to Worcester, forming the north side of the High Town triangle. Although some writers have suggested that this triangle was originally an open market place, subject to later infilling, it now seems more likely that this was a simple three-way road junction, with conventional plots to both sides of each street and markets held in the street spaces (see p. 59). No. 25 lies on the north side of Commercial Street (Fig. 2.40): it occupies a narrow plot, almost certainly an early post-Conquest burgage in origin. The frontage block is built across the

Commercial Street frontage, filling the entire width of the plot. Immediately behind it there is a change in alignment of the rest of the plot, approximately 10 degrees to the east, as it and its neighbours were fitted into their irregularly bounded location; the curved plot in turn influenced the layout of its component buildings. An alleyway, Preece's Passage, runs down the western side of the property and gives pedestrian access from Commercial Street to the Maylord Orchard shopping-centre at the rear built in the 1980s. No. 25 is currently occupied by a discount shop.

There are five known historic structures on the site but only the three at the rear were studied. The frontage block, despite being re-fronted in the early 19th century, is substantially 17th century in date and timber-framed. The range immediately behind it is a late 17th- or early 18th-century infill between the frontage and a timber-framed building of *c.*1600 with a fine ground-floor ceiling (Fig. 3.29); it was possibly jettied towards the passage. The oldest remains on the site are of a narrow two-storey, timber-framed cross-wing further to the rear, built at right-angles across the plot with its west gable facing onto the passage. This may have been a small late 15th- or early 16th-century chamber block attached to an earlier or contemporary hall on the site of, and subsequently replaced by, the late 16th-century range with its fine ceiling. Furthest to the rear is an 18th-century extension – a very late example of timber-framing in the city (Fig. 3.30).

Historical background

There are no pre-19th-century deeds for this property, nor has it been possible to trace ownership through Land Tax records. The fact, however, that the building was two doors away from Trinity Hospital has made it possible to locate the occupant in the assessments for St Peter's Parish Poor Rate for 1719.

A deed for 1763 describes a house between Trinity Hospital and the house of Joseph Sandford, lately occupied by Francis Perkins, joiner.[18] This house would be the present 27, while Joseph Sandford's house was 26. Joseph Sandford was assessed for a house three down from the Bye Street Gate in 1719 – the hospital, understandably, was exempt. The next house down the list belonged to John Rawlings and is presumably 25.[19] John Rawlings was a joiner who died in 1735; a detailed inventory of his house, for which Francis Perkins was also an appraiser, survives among the probate records in Hereford Record Office.[20]

Description

The fabric and origins of the buildings are now largely hidden behind

external render and brick and internal plaster, and their roofs have all been raised and rebuilt. The west elevations of the buildings on the plot face onto Preece's Passage.

The oldest remains on the site are of a narrow, two-storey, timber-framed range built at right-angles across the plot, its west gable facing onto the passage. This gable is close-studded, not jettied, and just over 3.1 m wide. The substantial corner posts are jowled, but the jowls do not quite match. The northern jowl is flared, the southern one has more of a gunstock profile; as both are chamfered internally and have the appropriate stave groove for the laths of the infill between the studs, the difference between the two is a little unusual. The close-studding is of storey-high studs with no mid-rail, all the mortice and tenon joints being single pegged. The original panel infills were replaced by hand-made red brick, probably in the later 18th century.

The sole-plate survives *in situ* and unless there was originally a particularly high stone plinth beneath it, the first floor was taller than the ground floor. The height between the present ground-floor level and the top of the girding beam is 2 m, whilst that between the top of the girding beam and the top of the tie-beam over is 2.5 m. Despite this, only the window opening in the ground floor is primary, and it retains its original sill. The first-floor window above it is clearly secondary. Its sill is not properly jointed to the studs that form its jambs or to the tops of those below it. At the same time there are redundant mortices in the truss tie-beam that would have taken the original head-tenons of the two central studs cut down to make room for the opening.

The truss is very simple, consisting of just the principals, supported by a pair of raking struts from the slightly cambered tie-beam. The ends of the tie-beam appear to have been cut to accommodate a later ceiling structure and it is possible that the first floor was open to the roof. The roof had a single tier of purlins, their ends tenoned into the rafters of this truss. Unusually, the rafter-foot mortices at the ends of the tie-beam are cut through and also accommodate the tenons of the end studs of the first-floor framing.

The other gable-end frame and any cross-frames have not survived and only fragments survive of the side frames, both at their western ends. The south frame now returns for just one bay, 2.1 m long, from the gable. The first bay post survives, although part of its mid- section has been cut away. Nevertheless, it only has a mortice in its north flank for a first-floor girding beam, and there is no stave groove above or below this to indicate the existence of infilled close-studding on this cross-frame. At first-floor level the post is chamfered on both of its

internal corners. These, admittedly limited pieces of evidence, do suggest that the frame continued further eastwards. This is supported by the very limited evidence of the north frame and by the design of the range immediately to the south. At first-floor level there are the remains of two studs that flank a primary window opening; the ground-floor framing has been removed.

The fragmentary remains of the north frame consist mainly of its first-floor girding beam. In the soffit there are traces of stave holes but no conclusive evidence of its original ground-floor panel pattern. The beam continues east of the bridging beam seen at the east end of the south frame but is then obscured by later brick casing. In the short section between the bridging beam and the brickwork, the beam has a chamfer on the inside and traces in the soffit of three small, square, mortices. The evidence suggests that this was the site of a fairly large mullioned window of at least three lights. Only the decorative western stop of the chamfer is visible, so it is possible that the window continued into the area now obscured by the brickwork.

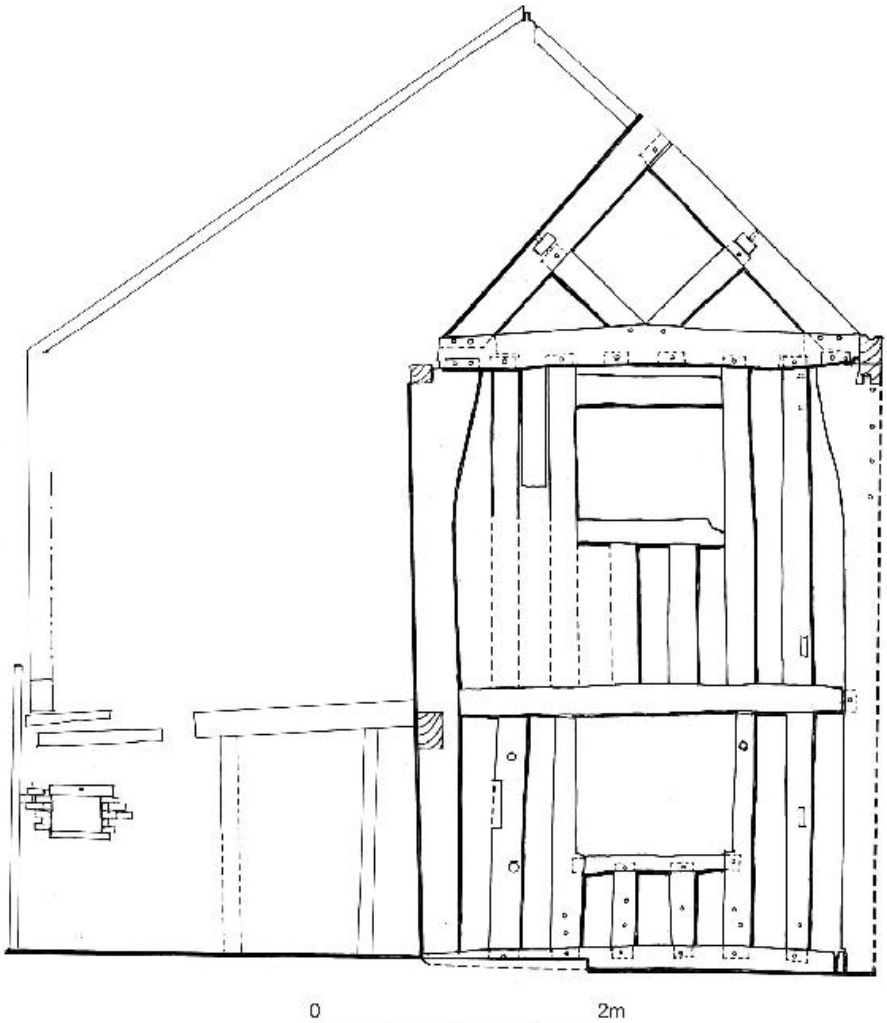


Figure 3.28 The close-studded western gable end of the northern wing of 25 Commercial Street.

Although its remains are very fragmentary, enough survives of this building to indicate that it was a two-storey cross-wing of at least two bays, and almost certainly of three or even four. It was built against the northern end of a range on the site now occupied by the slightly later building to the south. The rooms on each floor were at least two bays wide, the upper ones being taller and presumably more important than the lower ones. The probable existence of a window in the north wall indicates that it did not then butt against a building on this side. The position of a window at the western extremity of the south frame could suggest that there was already a building against the rest of that frame and the window looked down onto the present passageway. The fact that the gable end was close-studded strongly

suggests that this was a public elevation and that the passageway already existed when the building was built.

Dateable features are few, but a late medieval date seems likely, probably in the late 15th century. Considering the height of its first-floor room, it could have been a domestic block attached to a hall range to the south, with a great chamber occupying the first floor above a parlour below. It was radically altered when the new hall wing was added to the south, and has been altered on several more occasions since.

Immediately to the south of this northern cross-wing is a single-bay, two-storey range, originally under a roof aligned north–south, parallel to the adjacent passage. The northern frame of this building appears to have replaced all but the westernmost bay of the southern frame of the cross-wing. The southern and eastern frames were only partially exposed, but most of the west frame could be seen during the survey.

Figure 3.29 The fine moulded grid of substantial ceiling beams within 25 Commercial Street is similar to those in 18 High Town and the Conservative Club, perhaps suggesting the same team of carpenters or at least a local style, however limited in extent

The range did not appear to continue southwards. Instead, this single bay is wider (6.4 m) than it is long (3.9 m). The northern frame

was designed to be an open frame and consists solely of the corner posts, first-floor girding beam, and a truss whose tie-beam is supported by small angle brackets from the post tops. The western post has a gunstock jowl, the eastern post a gently flaring jowl. Both are chamfered on their southern, inner flanks only. Curiously, one of the brackets is chamfered on both sides, as is the tie-beam, but the other is only chamfered on the south side.

The truss retains only its tie-beam and principals, but redundant mortices indicate its original design. It once had a collar and there is a single mortice in the centre of the tie to show that there was a single central stud supporting it. Evidence in the surviving eastern rafter shows that the roof originally had two tiers of butt-purlins, the lower ones supported by wind-braces, and a ridge-piece. These purlins, along with the rest of the rafters, had been removed, presumably when the present roof was added, and replaced with two tiers of trenched purlins. Only the tie-beam survives of the south frame truss.

The ground-floor portion of the western frame has been rebuilt in brick, but the chamfers on the inside of the northwest corner post and the adjacent first-floor girding-beam indicate the position of a primary doorway. There are less-distinct traces of another chamfer in the girding-beam to the south that could suggest the position of another opening, presumably a window.

The framing at first-floor level is not intact but was evidently of two rows of simple square panels, four wide. The central stud is storey-high, those on either side being interrupted by the mid-rail. To the south of the central stud the top of the mid-rail has been cut down, possibly indicating the position of a window opening. Most of the wattle-and-daub panel infills have been replaced with brick nogging. The limited sections of the east frame visible suggest that this was of the same design, though possibly incorporating a lateral stack rather than a window.

The floor levels in this range matched those in the cross-wing and the fact that its north frame was open and has no indications of weathering shows that the rooms in each range were combined. The ground-floor space has a fine ceiling made up of intersecting, moulded first-floor joists creating a grid three panels long and five wide. It was clearly a room of high status. It is not clear whether or not the first-floor room was originally open to the roof, or ceiled. The roof of this range appears to have continued northwards, replacing the lower roof of the original cross-wing.

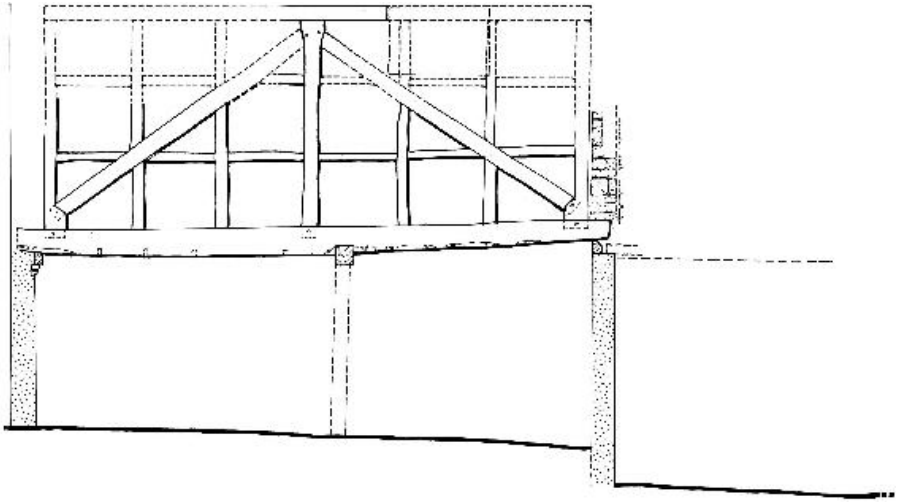


Figure 3.30 The northern wall-frame of the northern extension to the north range of 25 Commercial Street represents a complete contrast in timber-framing technique. Probably of 18th-century date, it is based on a trussed partition with a central king stud, supporting a pair of long braces from the jowled feet of the end studs; it was probably brick-nogged from the start

The first-floor joists are similar to those found in 18 High Town (Building 23) and in the former Conservative Club (Building 19). The single-strut collared truss is also similar to the original design of the trusses in the former Conservative Club and in Pool Farm (Building 8). These other buildings probably date from the mid-16th century and this may well be the date of this range. If so, the northern cross-wing would have been a fairly new structure and the radical changes made to it when this range was built need to be explained. There were signs of fire damage at the northeast corner, but the date of this could not be determined.

If there were no structural problems with the building and no fire, then it would seem that in the 16th century the changing needs of the owner were more important than saving money by retaining old buildings – although the remains of the cross-wing were retained and adapted to fit in with the new internal layout of this part of the property. It may have been built to provide a new ground-floor hall or parlour with a great chamber above. Later still, probably in the 18th century, further radical changes were made to this range.

An extension was added to the north of the cross-wing and a new roof encompassed both buildings. This range is interesting only for being a very late (18th-century) example of the timber-framing technique, one in which a degree of scientific study produced a more efficient use of timber. The north wall of the new two-storey range was completely open at ground-floor level, but the first-floor was

closed.

To reduce the loadings on the first-floor bridging beam, the framing was designed as a trussed partition. The two corner posts were tenoned into the top of the bridging beam, and there was a central storey-high stud or post. The top of this post, and the feet of the corner posts, were jowled and straight down-braces ran from the jowls on either side of the central post to the jowls at the feet of the corner posts. The braces interrupted the rest of the framing pattern which consisted of three rows of square brick-nogged panels. Only the corner and mid-post tenons were pegged; the rest were simply nailed. This frame was probably built towards the end of the 18th century.

Discussion

Although an inventory of the house of 1739 has been identified through careful study of the documentary evidence of adjacent properties, there are no earlier deeds relating to the property and any assessment of the buildings' form, function and status is necessarily reliant on the structural analysis alone.

It is clear that within the rear ranges of this complex of buildings there are three phases of timber-framed structures that reflect differences in framing techniques. However, the changes made to these buildings make a thorough analysis quite difficult. The oldest section, at the northern end, may have been a small late 15th- or even early 16th-century chamber block attached to an earlier or contemporary structure, subsequently replaced by the mid-16th-century range with its fine ground-floor ceiling. It is possible that this represented a new ground-floor hall with a chamber above, replacing an earlier open hall, but on the available evidence this can only be a hypothesis. The 18th-century framing of the northern extension is interesting too, as it represents a continuation of a traditional construction technique well into the age in which brick construction was almost ubiquitous within the city centre, with timber-framing confined to ancillary buildings, the most inconspicuous external elevations, and internal partitions.

(13) 50a St Owen Street (Figs 3.31–3.34)

Introduction

The building lies on the south side of St Owen Street, just inside the site of St Owen's Gate, on the eastern edge of the medieval city; the ground-floor occupants are currently Bones the Barbers and the India Palace restaurant. It occupies one of a series of what are now very

short plots that terminate at a curving retaining wall on the line of the old pre-Conquest defences, just as they emerge from the footprint of the post-Conquest defences built on top of them further to the east. The plot containing 50a has, however, been truncated, the historical evidence showing that it was once a great triangular parcel extending across the pre-Conquest defences to St Ethelbert's Street on the west side and the castle ditch to the south. Although we cannot be sure of its precise bounds, it would have been close to an acre in extent – a remarkable size, even for the very last, easternmost, intramural plot.

Sub-divided and completely re-fronted, it is almost impossible to recognise this once high-status timber-framed building – even from within. That there was a structure of some antiquity behind the mixed mid-19th-century facades had been recognised in 1988, but it was only when repairs were being carried out to a later timber-framed extension to the rear that its importance was recognised.

The earliest surviving range, fronting the street, is a relatively high-status timber-framed house of the late 16th or early 17th century; it was probably part of a larger complex of which no other buildings survive. Jettied on the frontage, it had a large two-bay room on each floor flanked by single-bay rooms at either end, at least one fine mullioned window to the rear, and a stair tower. Its status appears to have declined by the second half of the 17th century, when a long timber-framed range of fairly simple construction was built to the rear, butting against its eastern bay and blocking the once-grand window.

Historical background

The biggest obstacle to understanding these properties is the number of times the buildings have been divided, re-divided and sub-divided. The site was originally the whole of the large, triangular plot of land just inside St Owen's Gate, stretching as far back as St Ethelbert's Street (see fig. 1.2) to the side (west) and rear. The plot was bounded on the east by the gate and city wall but cut across the line of the old Saxon city wall to the south. Initially it seems there was one house on the St Owen Street frontage; later this became two, then three. The last stage, in the late 19th century, saw the end house lopped-off for a new road (Cantilupe Street) and the rest of the terrace divided up yet again in the early 20th century; more remodelling occurred even more recently. All this has made not only the building, but also the documents, difficult to interpret.

The earliest documentation of this plot is an isolated deed, enrolled, for greater security of tenure, in the Great Black Book, part of Hereford Corporation archives. Here it is recorded that in 1550,

Alice, the widow of William Welford, gent., together with her children, heirs of William Welford, conveyed to John Darnell of Hereford, gent.,

One tenement or capytall messuage within the walls of the sayd cytey of Heref in a strett ther called Hungry strett betwixt the sayd walles off the sayd cytey on thon parte and the castell strett ys ende on thother parte and one close or orchard with a pygyn howse in the same close sett lying and being between the said Tentt or capytall mease on thon parte and the castell dyche on thother parte. Together with all other howses buyldynges lands and tenements that latte were the sayd Willam Welfford & the sayd Alice sett lying being or adyoynyng unto or upon the premyses.[21]

It is rare to be able to identify a plot from a single deed, but here, however, the fixed points of the city wall, Hungry Street (later St Owen Street), the end of Castle Street (later to be known as St Ethelbert's Street) and the Castle Ditch, later the Castle Pool, fix the position unequivocally as the site of the houses, now 48–52 St Owen Street. Just what sort of structure was built on the site at that time is not clear, but by the end of the 17th century there are some indications that there were two houses in position. One, the larger, had a long frontage on Castle Street – in fact, in the 19th century it faced into this street – and in later years the owner of this house always included as part of his property a piece of land belonging to the city and described as north of the Castle Pool. When, therefore, Richard Ravenhill appears in the city rent roll, paying an encroachment fine for a house in Castle Street and a rent for ground north of the pool, it is a reasonable assumption that he was living in this house.[22]

In the 1870s, Hereford City Council prepared plans to develop the area behind St Owen Street and to cut the present Cantilupe Street diagonally across from the St Ethelbert Street/St Owen Street junction to join Mill Street further to the south. To do so they bought the land on the St Ethelbert's/St Owen Street corner. The deeds they collected and created show that, after 1727, Timothy Geers was the tenant.[23] By his will, dated 1747, Timothy Geers left to his sons 'the house he then lived in with outhouses, Stables, Gardens, Dovehouse and Orchard'. Deeds in the city collection show that he also leased the piece of garden next to the Castle Pool and also the pool itself from the city.[24] This ground, both garden and pool, had been leased by the Duke of Chandos when the St Owen Street house had been in his hands at the beginning of the century.

The corner house, later to be called 48 St Owen Street, was still a high-status building: as late as 1799 it was described on the land tax certificate as a mansion house. The pigeon house and orchard appear to have survived from the earlier period and continue to be mentioned in documents until 1777. Taylor's map of 1757 shows the street front completely built up from the St Ethelbert Street corner as far as St Owen's Gate, apart from an entrance cut through the property to the gardens behind.

After the death of Timothy Geers, the property was bought by Francis Woodhouse, who almost certainly lived in the house next door, now 50a to 52, and part of 48. After his death his family put the house up for sale and an advertisement was placed in the *Hereford Journal* on 3 April 1777. It read:

To be sold by private contract, A House fronting St. Owen's Street, in this city, 56 feet in length towards the North, and 100 feet in length, next Little Castle Street, towards the West, with a large garden and orchard 300 feet long and 245 feet broad, extending to a moat or fish pond on the North-side of the Castle Green, with a dove house thereon erected, all freehold, together with a slip of land 71 feet long and 65 feet broad, adjoining to the West side and held with a moat or fish pond by lease for – years, renewable under the Corporation of Hereford at the annual rent of eleven shillings and sixpence.

N.B. The House is old, but in tolerably good repair and has a large quantity of good materials particularly timber, boards, stone and tile – the Moat well stored with fish and the garden of rich soil.

Inquiries of John Woodhouse, Esq. or James Woodhouse, in Hereford.

April 3. 1777.[25]

They subsequently sold it to John Cam, Doctor of Physic in 1778. The advertisement suggests that, at this date, this part of 48 was still timber-framed. It also locates the city ground near the pool more precisely and gives the dimensions whereby it has been possible to reconstruct the partition line between the two houses. In 1782 the house in Little Castle Street was also transferred.

The part of the St Owen Street house which probably included stables and outhouses, and stretched down St Ethelbert Street, abutted a long plot that fronted that street and extended to the St Ethelbert's Hospital property on the corner with Castle Street. This plot contained a row of cottages, not originally part of the St Owen Street site, which became gardens and an orchard. By 1858, the Public Health map shows the main house divided into three: 1 St Ethelbert Street, 48 St

Owen Street and 50a St Owen Street. The central house was made, not by dividing one house but by taking space from both. The area between 50a and 52 and the town wall was infilled with three little houses, possibly part of the 17th-century development.

By 1882, when the city council were buying these premises, 1 St Ethelbert Street was sold with the garden, lawn, meadow, coach house, stables and pool. A plan of 1884 shows Cantelupe Street in position and building plots laid out. The new layout completely destroyed the corner property and clipped the back comer of 48. The 1:500 O.S. map of 1885 shows the buildings in their present form but, in fact, the brick casing of the end of 48 was completed when Marriott's garage was built behind, in Cantilupe Street, in 1904. The alterations to 50a–52 took place in the 1920s.

Description

The complex documentary evidence was echoed by the building analysis, in that the building was difficult to record accurately because of decorative finishes, and much of the interpretation was confused by the oddities of later divisions and sub-divisions.

The earliest structure is a four-bay building nearly 15 m long and just over 6 m wide. It is not quite rectangular in plan, as the west gable is aligned at a slight angle, making the north (street) elevation slightly longer than the rear. The building is two storeys high with attics, and there is cellarage under the two central bays.

The first floor on the street elevation was jettied, but it is difficult to assess how much of the framing survives *in situ*. Visible peg-holes in the beams and posts of the frame indicate that the first-floor framing consisted of three tiers of rectangular panelling with two intermediate posts in each bay, probably flanking primary window positions.

Due to the later buildings that butt against it, assessing the rear frame was somewhat difficult and called for some contortions on the part of the surveyors, particularly in the easternmost bay. The western two bays were either inaccessible or removed, but the complete absence of any mortices in the western flank of the central bay-post suggests that the west central bay may have contained a large chimney stack.

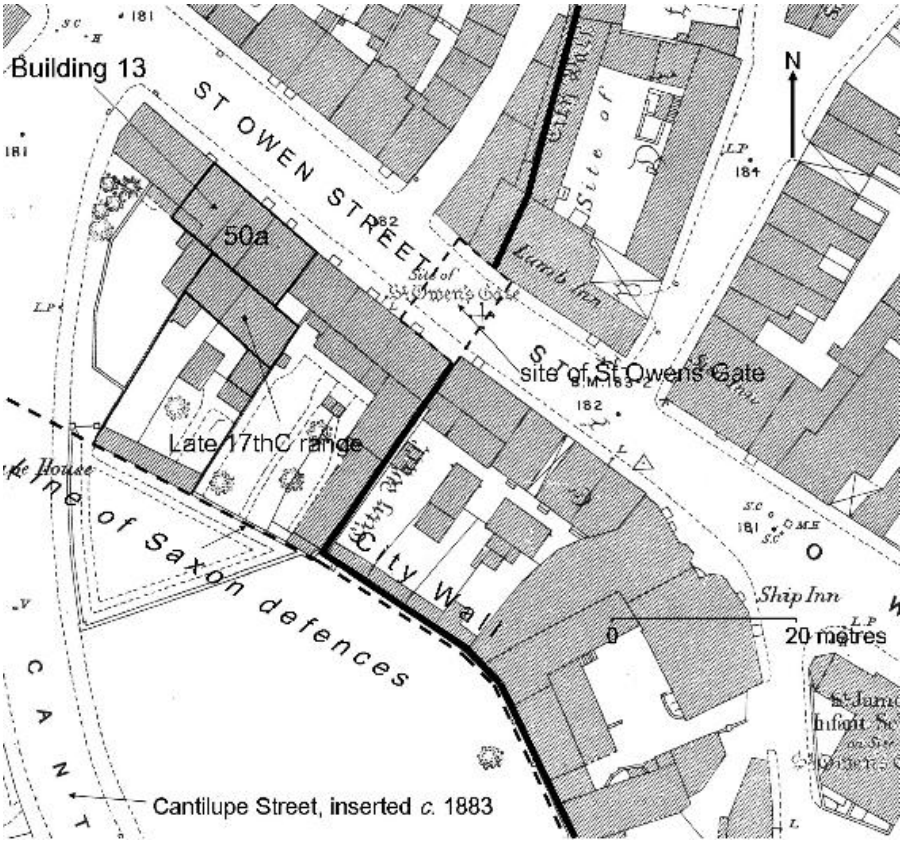


Figure 3.31 No. 50a St Owen Street (Building 13) and its surroundings, based on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1886. It lay one plot away from St Owen's Gate and backs onto a property boundary following the line (and earthwork) of the pre-Conquest defences, though it formerly extended further to the south and west

The east central bay framing was unusual. At ground-floor level there were once two intermediate storey-high posts, only the eastern one of which survives in place. This has an ovolo chamfer on its eastern corner and an empty mortice for what was probably the lintel of a doorway in the eastern part of the bay. In the other flank of the post there are two mortices for a pair of rails, but the rest of the framing is inserted.

On the first floor there are also two mortices on the bay-posts, but these clearly took only very short rails that were stopped after less than 200 mm by a pair of storey-high posts. Just below the wall-plate, these posts are joined by a beam acting as the lintel for a wide opening in the centre of the bay. There are stubby prick-posts (see *Glossary*) above the lintel continuing the overall frame pattern of three panels high and three wide in each bay.

In the outer face of both the lintel and the girding beam is a series

of mortices, presumably for joists. The most likely explanation of the framing in this bay is that there was formerly either a first-floor oriel window or, and perhaps more probably, a stair tower into which the ground-floor doorway led. There are two visible, matching, vertical mortices on the bay-post that could be associated with the side frames of this suggested stair tower.

The first-floor framing of the eastern bay could only be reached with great difficulty, and only the wall-plate could be studied in any degree of detail. This has in its moulded soffit a series of seven small mortices, alternating with drilled stave-holes. The logical explanation of this is that the wall-plate acted as the lintel of a bay-wide eight-light window, the mortices being for the mullions and the drilled stave holes for the glazing stanchions. It was impossible to determine the height of the window sill or to ascertain whether or not it has a transom.

The gable and cross-frames were virtually impossible to study because of decorative finishes. They were probably of similar square panelling, perhaps with two interrupted rails and four panels wide. The central cross-frame was open (see below).

Figure 3.32 Photograph of the largely unassuming facade of 50a St Owen Street in 2016. This hides the complex sub-division of its once-jettied, four-bay timber-framed front range (behind the building with projecting bay windows, extending right as far as 'exclusive restaurant & bar')

The roof structure survives more or less intact, though it is evident that it has lost its original cross-gabled dormers. Only two trusses could be studied. The central one was open, consisting simply of tie-beam, principals, two queen posts and a collar. The truss separating the eastern bay from the eastern-central bay was closed, but contains a blocked primary doorway towards the east side, its jambs chamfered on the south and rebated on the north. Above the collar was once a pair of 'V' struts.

The trusses support two tiers of purlins. These are trenched, but the detailing is a little different to standard trenched purlins. The cuts on the backs of the principals do not run through the entire width of the timber, leaving a small baulk in the centre. The purlins are thus only bay-length, and their ends slot into the half-trench on the principals. The lower purlins seem to have been quite short, ending in a mortice and tenon joint with a thicker than normal rafter close to each truss.

The evidence suggests that each bay had a cross-gabled dormer roof on each side, maximising the available attic space. Where visible, the pattern of pegs in the wall-plate tops suggests that the dormer gable trusses continued the three panels per bay pattern suggested elsewhere in the framing. There were presumably windows in each of these dormer gables, and possibly 'V'-struts above their lintels to match those seen in one of the cross-frames.

The original layout of this main range was quite straightforward. On each level, attics included, there was a double-bay central chamber flanked by single-bay rooms at either end. The cellars are only under the central bays and are stone-lined; the present spiral stone stair down to them is a later addition. The ground-floor structure above the cellared section is supported on a moulded spine beam. First and attic floors are supported on a pair of axial beams, all of which have step-stopped ovolo chamfers. Identical chamfers occur in the wall-plates, girding-beams and truss-ties.

The large central rooms must have been the principal rooms, and those at ground- and first-floor levels were probably heated by fireplaces in a now-missing stack on the south side of the west-central bay. It is unclear whether the attic floor was heated. At ground-floor level a doorway led from the corner of the main chamber into what was probably a stair tower.

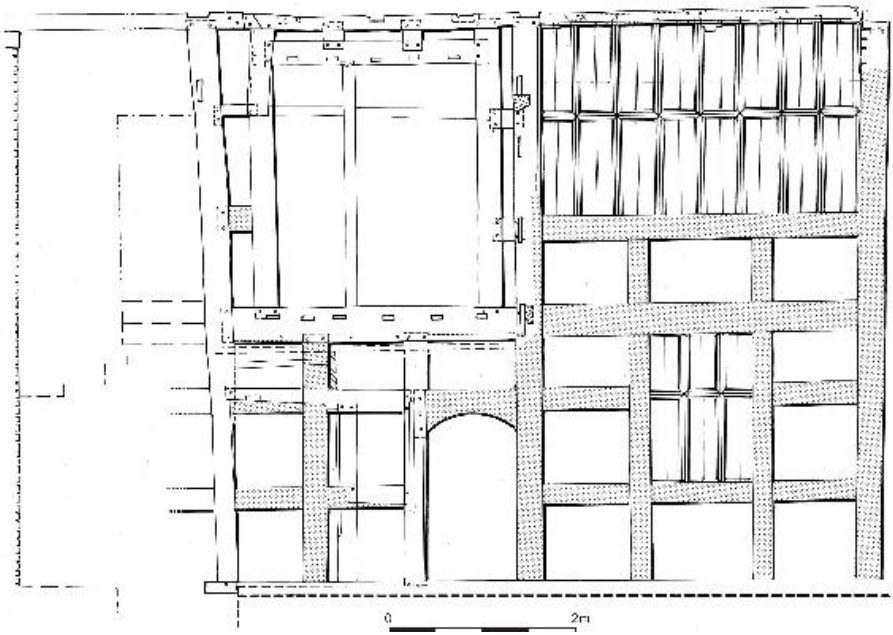


Figure 3.33 Survey and reconstruction (missing timbers shaded) of the eastern half of the rear, or south, frame of 50a St Owen Street, indicating a once high-status dwelling. The wall-plate provides evidence for the eight-light first-floor window and the opening in the framing to its left was probably for a stair turret

There were presumably other doorways from the main chamber to the single-bay rooms on either side, one of which probably acted as an entrance hall, the other as a withdrawing room. The large room was thus probably the main parlour or hall of the building. At first-floor level the main room was probably the great chamber – the main bedroom. It is clear, nevertheless, from the size of the large window in the rear frame of the east room at this level that it too was of high status – possibly a grand dressing room or closet to the main room. The attics were spacious and clearly also used for domestic accommodation.

All in all this was evidently a well-built, high-status house, just inside the city wall, dating to the late 16th or early 17th century. It is likely to have been one part of a larger complex, and there are traces of contemporary framing in the adjacent building to the west. The rest of the curtilage behind it, however, has no traces of buildings of this date.

A timber-framed block of two-and-a-half bays (not illustrated) was built along the rear of the main frontage building at a later date, resulting in the removal of the former stair tower. This new range, of two storeys with attics, was cheaply built, having an open and ephemeral frame butting the earlier building, and simple square

panelling in its southern (rear) frame. The central bay-post in the north frame is not matched by one in the south frame, there being no proper cross-frame. The bridging beam below the intermediate truss is tenoned into the side of the southern girding-beam, and the truss tie sits on top of the wall-plate. This truss consists only of a tie and principals, all apparently re-used. The rest of the framing has been much altered and the east gable has been virtually rebuilt in brick. The surviving framing was in a poor condition at the time of the survey and has mostly had to be replaced.

This range seems to have had just one room on each floor level, the lower one being heated by a fireplace in an apparently primary stone stack on the western flank. The northern half-bay contains, in one corner, a primary stair that retains its original mid- to late 17th-century balusters on the lower flight. This stair may have continued up into the attic originally. One structural rarity (for Hereford) in the building is the use of lath-and-plaster flooring for the attic; the first floor is plain boarding.

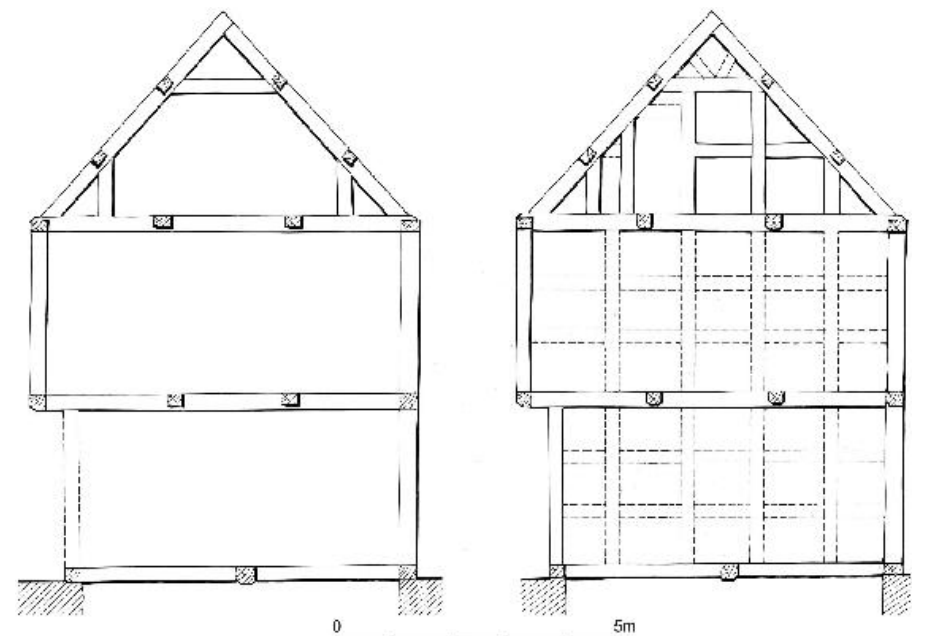


Figure 3.34 Outline survey and reconstruction of a cross-frame and gable-end frame of the jettied front range of 50a St Owen Street (street/north, to the left)

Discussion

The plot is first documented in 1550, as a capital messuage in the hands of a gentleman's widow, indicating that the property itself was

a relatively valuable one, even before the earliest surviving building. This, fronting the street, was probably built slightly later, in the late 16th or early 17th century. The repeated sub-divisions of the buildings complicate the understanding of their development. The jettied frontage range is the sole surviving element of a once-larger complex date from the late 16th to the early 17th century. With a two-bay room flanked by single-bay rooms on each floor level, evidence of a fine mullioned window, and a stair tower, it was of relatively high status. Its status appears to have declined by the second half of the 17th century. The long and plain timber-framed range built to the rear butted against its eastern bay and blocked the grand mullioned window.

Changes to the front elevation took place at a later date and the present appearance of the building dates to a time after it had been subdivided on several occasions; its facade is now essentially of 19th-century date.

(14) Wyebridge House, 24 Bridge Street (Figs 3.14; 3.35–3.37; Plate 22)

Introduction

As its name suggests, Wyebridge House stands next to the medieval Wye Bridge, on the north bank of the river at the bottom end of Bridge Street, just below the Black Lion on the west side of the street. The front wall of the cellar under the Bridge Street frontage is formed by the medieval bridge abutment, including part of an original cutwater. The building is also partly built on the line of the medieval city wall where it returned eastwards to join the end of the bridge, thus ensuring that the latter – which had a tower and drawbridge towards its outer (south) end – was fully integrated into the city defences.

The principal building examined here is set back from the Bridge Street frontage (which is occupied by an earlier but much-altered building), running east–west along the city wall, overlooking the river. It was a grand, close-studded building, with one large and one smaller, full-width, room on each floor above a basement, served by an attached stair tower. Stylistically it is dateable to around 1600.

Historical background

Early 19th-century paintings of Wyebridge House show the property divided into two phases of timber building. The rear, river-facing, portion displays gables and close-studding over a ground-floor wall of stone. The front part, facing the street, is also timber-framed, but appears later, perhaps dating from the late 17th century. The paintings show a large malthouse, adjacent to the rear portion, and also built of stone. The property was originally in two parts, each with its own set of deeds and each part claiming to be next to the bridge. Not until it was realised that, not only were the two parts of the house built at different times, but that each part had different owners and each was originally occupied as a separate unit, was it possible to sort out the confusion.

In 1586 the rear property was transferred from John Parry, Esq., of Acornbury (Aconbury), to William Woolridge, gent., of the same parish. It was then described as, ‘All that house or tenement in the City of Hereford heretofore Hugh Lewis als Scudamore, late parcel of the possessions of James Boddenham’. This suggests that, prior to John Parry’s ownership, the premises had been part of James Boddenham’s estate but that the tenant was Hugh Lewis, some

relation of the Scudamore family.[26]

In the next document, dated 1616, Jane Woolridge, William's widow, now of Myllhough, assigned the property to Gyles Woolridge of Dinmore, perhaps a son. Here the house is referred to as 'All that messuage, tenement or Mansion House, gardayne and backsyde thereunto … next aioyning to the Bridge there called Wyebridge … in the possession of the said Gyles Wollridge'. The term 'Mansion house', which indicates a large house, does not appear in the earlier deed and suggests that the house may have been rebuilt between 1586 and 1616, perhaps as a town house for the family.[27]

The stone foundations for the Woolridges' house are actually part of the medieval city wall, which runs along the south side of the house, where its fabric is still visible. South of the wall was a strip of ground which belonged to the city and must once have been part of the defences, most probably an extramural ditch or a river channel used as such. The owners of the house must have leased this strip from the corporation, at least from the time of the rebuilding.

William Westfaling, who bought the house from the Woolridges, is recorded in the city rent roll as having rented this plot,[28] and a lease for this 'little Close, orchard and parcell of ground' was granted to Richard Wadeley in 1701, when it was described as 'bounded on the West with the lands called the Fryers, Wyebridge on the East, the River Wye on the South, and the Town Wall and a pool or pond in the possession of Mr John Hill on the North part thereof'.[29]

In 1664 William Westfaling sold the rear house and the lease of the adjoining city ground to Thomas and Sybil Lane who were already living there. It was described as 'Aionyng to the bridge called Wyebridge and the River of Wye there'.[30] Evidence in the hearth tax shows that this was indeed a large property. Thomas Lane paid for five hearths in the 1664 hearth tax and nine in 1665, a remarkable number for all but the very largest of private dwellings.[31]

It is possible that the rise between the two years marks the building of the malthouse.

In 1665, Thomas and his wife transferred the house and their personal estate to a relative, Richard Wadeley, a well-to-do Hereford apothecary. The documents give no reason for this move but record that Thomas and Sybil were to have the property for their lifetime. Sybil's sketchy inventory, taken in 1678, included 14 bushels of malt and 'A Kill Heare' – the hair cloth used for drying hops in the kiln; clearly they were malting on the premises.[32]

After Sybil's death, Richard Wadeley, 'my welbeloved kinsman', took over his inheritance, acquiring both parts of the property. A new

lease granted to Richard Wadeley by the city in 1699 refers to a messuage 'lately' assigned to him by Thomas Hutchins, victualler, who had rented it from the city in 1655.[33] In 1686 it was called the 'Blewhouse'.[34] Wadeley may have occupied the house himself, for at some time during this period he moved from Eign Ward to Wyebridge Ward.

In the 17th century the causeway leading to the Wye Bridge extended well into the present Bridge Street, so that the 'Blewhouse Inn', though adjacent to the bridge, did not extend as far south as did the adjoining 'Mansion House'. Richard Wadeley wanted to bring the two houses into line and his 1699 lease allowed him to 'set up what building he shall think fitt upon and to the peere of the Bridge that lyes neerest to the sd messuage southward over the River and Gout or watercourse there …'.[35] He subsequently rebuilt the end bay of the 'Blewhouse', extending it some way to the south to meet the front wall of the 'Mansion House', enclosing the bridge pier and the 'Gout or watercourse' within the cellar of his extended property.

From this time the two properties continued in single ownership. A series of 19th-century paintings indicate that little alteration took place in at least the outward appearance of the buildings. However, in the last quarter of the 19th century the malthouse and adjacent buildings were pulled down, including that portion of the city wall that had been incorporated in the structures.

A terrace of houses, Wye Terrace, was built on the ground to the west of the house. The west part was let as Wye Bridge Villa; the stucco front and sash windows that characterise the building today probably formed part of this remodelling. The Bridge Street frontage building is currently in use as a restaurant; the mansion behind is a private house.

Description

The former 'Mansion House' has been divided, vertically and horizontally, into several separate residences. From the river, the building appears to be a roughly symmetrical three-storey, stuccoed brick range with a recessed, three-bay, central portion flanked by single-bay projecting cross-wings with slated hipped roofs. This misleading appearance is entirely the product of the early 19th century, and the site has had a complicated development resulting in a confusing plan.

Figure 3.35 An early 19th-century view of Wyebridge House from the river bank before it was 'tidied up' later in the century; this clearly shows the two separate timber-framed elements – one, to the right, fronting Bridge Street, with the main range (Building 14) to the left. Pencil drawing by John Flower c.1830. (Herefordshire Museums)

This analysis is concerned with the core of the present building, a substantially intact timber-framed structure occupying the recessed central section – but there are further surviving elements of timber framing in the range fronting Bridge Street. The building was originally timber-framed but has a tall basement; its rendered southern wall is of rubble-stone, as is the lower part of the north wall; however, the rest of that wall is formed by the base of the timber-framing – though much of this area has been altered.

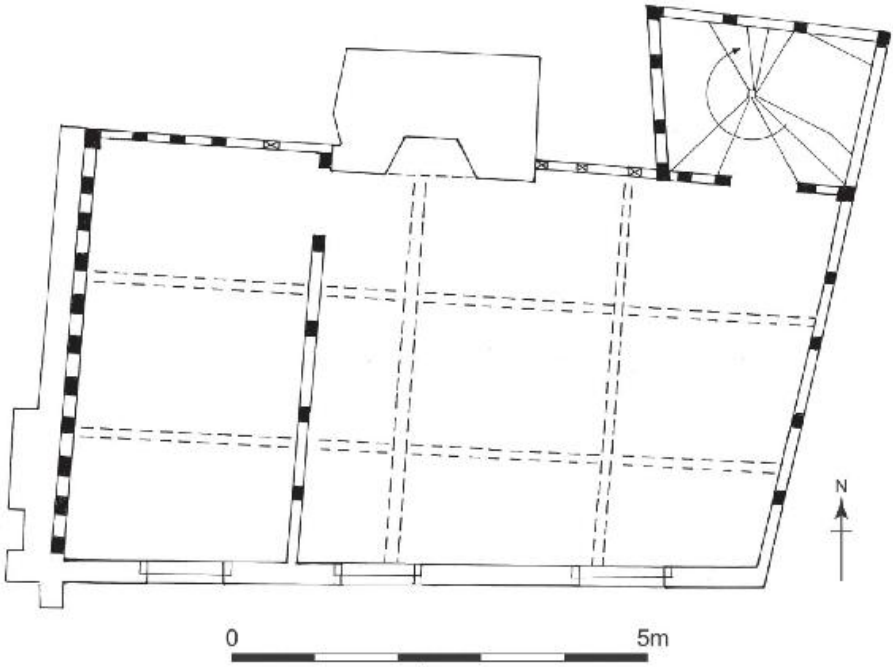


Figure 3.36 First-floor plan of the main portion of Wyebridge House, showing it divided into two unequal full-width rooms with an irregular stair turret at the north-eastern corner. Note how close the primary doorway through the cross-frame between the two rooms is to the fireplace

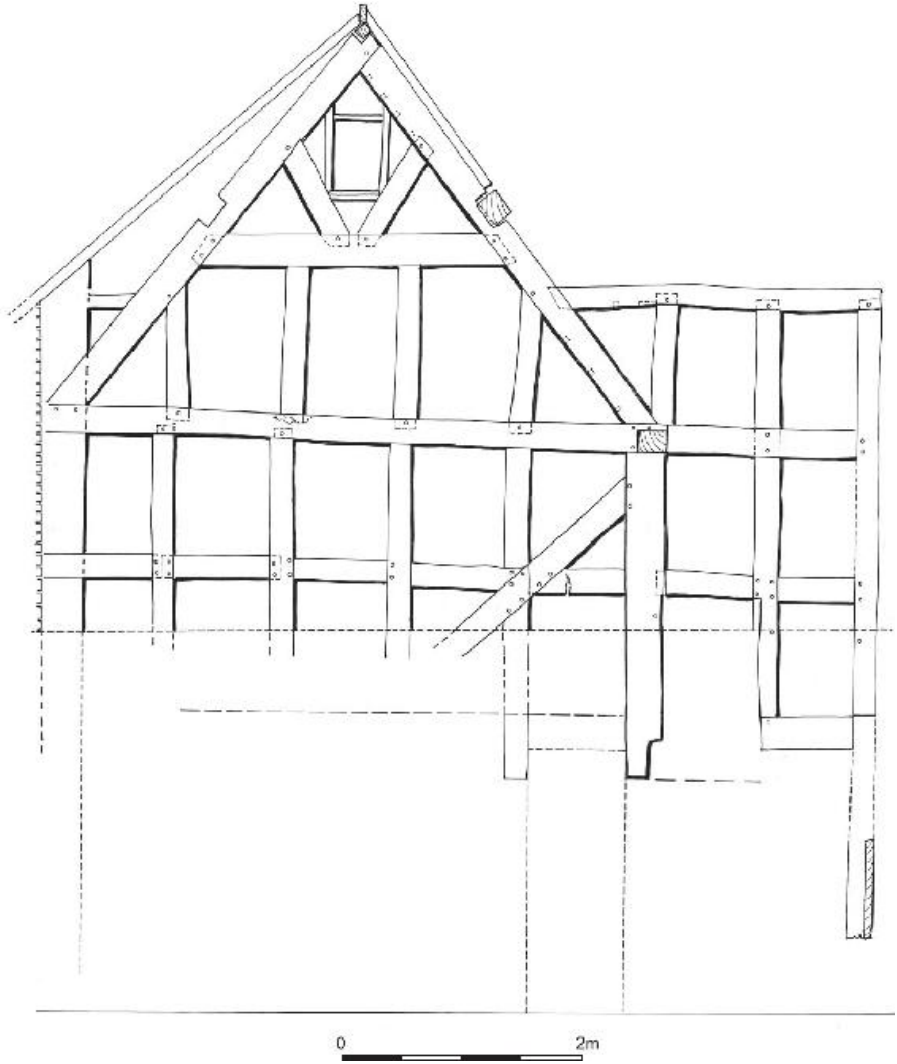


Figure 3.37 Part survey of the east gable-frame of Wyebridge House and its junction with the side-frame of the adjacent stair turret

The odd alignment of the east frame indicates that there was already a building on the site of the frontage range, and this is supported by the fact that this is the only external frame of plain rectangular panels. Its alignment is continued to the north in the east elevation of the contemporary stair tower, but there is no evidence in the surviving frame to indicate any primary links between no. 24 and an earlier structure on the street front.

The remaining external frames, excepting those of the attached stair tower, are (or were) of close-studding with a mid-rail. This more expensive framing was designed to be seen, whilst the plain panelling of the east frame was not.

The main, south, elevation has been rebuilt in brick. Evidence for the former framing is thus limited to old illustrations, but these are consistent in indicating that the elevation was close-studded and of two bays, each topped by a large dormer gable but, curiously, with the main windows in each bay offset to the left of centre. This elevation was also jettied at first- and attic-floor levels and there is some indication that the ground-floor framing was also jettied out from the stone wall of the cellar; the visible structural evidence of the gable and cross-frames supports the pictorial evidence.

The north elevation of the original build has been altered in places by the addition of doorways, and in other areas is obscured by wainscot. It was not jettied, and though basically close-studded, the precise design is unclear. There are some indications to suggest that it consisted mainly of storey-high studs with no mid-rail. It has primary doorways through it leading to the stair tower. There is a large, primary, central external stone stack serving fireplaces at ground- and first-floor levels.

The gable frames are of different designs and neither is now external. The west frame is visible at first-floor level, where it is of close-studding with a mid-rail. The much altered truss was originally also close-studded with an upper and lower collar forming, respectively, the lintel and sill of a glazed three-light window; only the lintel, the two studs above it, and the studs at either end of the truss, survive. The east gable frame is of much simpler design, with two rows of square panels at first-floor level interrupted only by a down-brace from the northern corner post. The ground-floor pattern may be the same. The truss has a single collar, with a pair of 'V-braces' above it.

The roof is of two equal-length bays, but the intermediate truss does not form part of the single cross-frame below. Its tie-beam is supported by the wall-plate on the south side and in the stack at the other. The trusses carried a single pair of trenched purlins and a ridge-piece, and there is some evidence for the original pair of tall cross-gabled dormers in the south elevation, shown on early illustrations, but removed when the roof was altered in the early 19th century. The pictorial evidence shows the dormer ridges to have been a little lower than those of the main roof. It is unclear whether these dormers were matched by others in the north slope of the roof.

Internally the cross-frame is offset to the west of centre, creating on each of the main floors two full-width spaces of unequal length, the eastern one being roughly twice as long as the other. Apart from not carrying a truss, the cross-frame is of the same basic design as the east

gable, but lacks a down-brace at first-floor level. There are three rows of slightly shorter panels on the ground floor, and, to accommodate a doorway at the north end of the frame, the down-brace at this level drops directly from the first-floor girding-beam rather than the north post.

The floor structures consist of paired axial beams interrupted by the cross-frame and by two bridging-beams in the broader eastern bay – creating, in the ceilings of these spaces, a three-by-three pattern of rectangles.

The stair tower attached to the north-east of the main structure is evidently contemporary. It is polygonal in plan because of the alignment of its east wall. It is square-framed, and contains a broad newel stair that rises to the attics. The original roof has been replaced. As built, it served only the main range, but later doorways were inserted to provide access to the range fronting Bridge Street.

The original plan of the two main floors of the building was fairly straightforward, but the original layout of the cellars is now less clear. At ground- and first-floor level there were just two rooms, the larger of which were to the east of the cross-frame and linked to the smaller rooms through plain-chamfered primary doorways. Each of these rooms was lit by windows in the south elevation, and the smaller ones could also have had windows in their northern walls. These larger rooms were heated by large fireplaces in a substantial northern stack; as this was central to the elevation it meant that the fireplaces were oddly positioned at one end of the room and close to the doorways into the adjacent unheated spaces. Presumably the larger room at ground-floor level was the hall, whilst the smaller one was a withdrawing room of sorts. At first-floor level, the larger room was probably the great chamber, with a secondary chamber leading off it.

The attics were clearly fully utilised as part of the accommodation and accessed by the stair tower. In all probability there were also two rooms at this level, one on either side of the intermediate truss. There was a relatively large window in the west gable, and presumably others in each of the dormers. These rooms were almost certainly used for additional sleeping accommodation, possibly for servants or simply for junior members of the family.

Decoration is fairly plain, with simple chamfers to beams and door surrounds. There are good sets of knife-cut carpenters' marks, with individual frame sequences 'differenced' by both knife-cut strokes, 'V's, and semi-circular gouge cuts.

The dating evidence is relatively limited but the constructional details and layout suggest a late 16th- or early 17th-century date.

When built, it had no direct connection with the existing building on the Bridge Street frontage to the east, and there appears to have been no other structures abutting it.

Architecturally, it is of interest in the manner by which aesthetic and practical demands are met by oddities in the design. The most obvious example is in the positioning of the cross-frame in order to create a large and small room on each level, irrespective of the usual structural design of a balanced two-bay roof with large matching dormers. As a result the truss had to sit directly onto the wall-plates. The original fenestration on the south elevation appears to have been designed to allow a centrally placed window to each of the rooms, at the inevitable expense of external symmetry. Conversely, the external north stack is not central to the larger rooms that it serves, instead being sited awkwardly at the western corner of each room, by the door through the cross-frame. It would have been more sensible to have placed the stack next to the stair tower, thus providing structural strength to that as well as even heat to the rooms in question. Why this was not done is unknown. It may have been to show-off the stair tower, or to avoid existing minor buildings, or to provide a convenient solid support for the northern end of the intermediate roof truss.

Discussion

What seems a straightforward piece of property was originally in three different ownerships: two parts belonging to the city (one facing Bridge Street and one between the city wall and the river) and one in private hands. The main house was probably built around 1600, using the city wall, leased from the city, as a foundation. Not until Richard Wadeley acquired the Blewhouse, in Bridge Street, towards the end of the 17th century were the three parts amalgamated and the whole property unified by extending the Bridge Street frontage.

The structural evidence indicates that the much-altered range on Bridge Street predates the main part of the present house. This was evidently a rather grand close-studded structure with one large and one smaller full-width room on each floor level above a basement, served by an attached stair tower. Stylistically this section is dateable to around 1600, which would tie in neatly with the suggestion in the documentary evidence that between 1586 and 1616 the property had been sufficiently rebuilt and extended to warrant being called a ‘mansion house’. The Woolridges were presumably the family responsible for the transformation. Later changes on the site included the erection of a brewhouse, changes on the Bridge Street elevation, and at least one major campaign of upgrading of the exterior. Much of the former garden of the house was redeveloped in the 19th century.

(15) The Grapes Tavern (Figs 3.38–3.41; Plate 23)

Introduction

The Grapes Tavern lies on the corner of East Street and Little Capuchin Lane (the narrow, northern, end of Church Street, leading to High Town) in the heart of the medieval city. Historically, its site lies at the back of one of the High Town burgages developed over the redundant pre-Conquest defences, The Grapes itself standing on the crest of the old rampart with a slight drop in level down to the rear (north), over the former ditch. Recently restored, the shape of the pub's new rendered elevations, its jetties and gables, was based on the results of the archaeological survey undertaken in 1989. The original timber-framed elevations had been replaced, probably in the late 18th and early 19th century, by flat, brick elevations which had become structurally unstable.

The survey found The Grapes to consist of two principal historic buildings. The main range, lying along the East Street frontage, has shallow jetties and dates to the first half of the 17th century; its two upper floors were probably used as a dwelling above a partly commercial ground floor. To the rear, facing a small courtyard, is a building characterised by low ceilings and a very substantial chimney stack built in a dedicated half-bay at its south end. Based on the structural evidence, an industrial or commercial use seems probable, and it can, with some certainty, be identified as the workshop of a pewterer, Francis Trapp, documented on the site in 1665. The Grapes Tavern is, in short, an extremely rare urban survival: an early modern workshop.

Historical background

This history of The Grapes public house is based on the information found in the deeds for property belonging to the Custos and Vicars' Choral of Hereford Cathedral. These deeds do not relate directly to The Grapes but belong to the site next door, a narrow plot along Church Street that abuts the north side of The Grapes premises.[36]

The first of these to survive dates from 1625, when the house to the south of the Vicars' Choral plot was described as the one at the end of the street in the occupation of Luke Hulett. This is clearly the house that ultimately became The Grapes. Luke Hulett was presented at the city court for 'not putting a sufficient Barr or rayle at the head of his taverne stayers belonging to his house'. The term tavern did not necessarily mean an ale-house, but might merely refer to a cellar.

Considerably more is known about his successor, Francis Trapp, who appears in a lease of 1665 and also in the Hearth Tax at the same

date. He was a pewterer, apparently the only pewterer working in Hereford when the London Pewterers' Company sent their searchers to the city in 1677 (Homer and Wall 1985, 15). Trapp paid for three hearths and held the house until his death in 1689. In this workshop, according to his probate inventory, Francis Trapp was manufacturing kettles, although it appears that he bought-in wares from a Worcester pewterer, Samuel Bourne (*ibid*, 42, 55). His workroom, the 'bak shop', may have been at the rear of the building with its own chimney for his three 'old' furnaces. Above, the two rooms called the 'Bak Roome' and 'Room over ye bak shop' each contained a bed and 'lumber' but the 'Bak Roome', which must have adjoined the chimney, had a hearth.[37] Since the inventory refers to a 'bak shop' it is likely that there was a front shop strategically placed on the corner of the two streets with the 'fore street chamber' over it, implying another chimney at this end of the house. He also had a middle room and a back kitchen. This 'kitchen' did not contain any cooking facilities and was obviously used for storage; cooking was carried out in the hall. In addition to these rooms, Francis Trapp had an attic, the gabled upper storey where there was a bed, a table board and more of the ubiquitous 'lumber'. There was also a cellar which he used for storing the sand, whiting and chalk that he needed for preparing his moulds.

Francis Trapp died intestate and his son, also a pewterer, administered his father's goods. He, however, did not take over his father's premises and by 1692 the property was in the hands of a shoemaker, Charles Dyer. Dyer was followed in 1740 by John Ravenhill, mercer, and then by another mercer, John Darke, in 1768. When he died in 1777, he left to his wife, Ann, 'all that my House, Messuage or Tenement wherein I now dwell situate in the several parishes of St Johns and St Peters', a description that, as the only house in the city to be split between the two parishes, marks the house as The Grapes.[38] Darke's widow continued to live and trade in the premises, according to a Sun Life Insurance company policy issued to Ann Darke, mercer and draper, sometime before 1787 for a property in Packers Lane (later West Street and East Street). In this policy the house was described as built of brick, timber and tiled, indicating that at least one phase of the brick alterations had been completed by this date.[39]

The Grapes did not become a pub until after Ann died about 1811. Even in the 1820s the occupant, Isaac Roberts, was being described as a liquor merchant and it seems likely that the first of the alterations that turned the property into a tavern of some standing took place when James Almond took over the place around 1824 and called the

pub The Grapes.[40] More work was done in the mid-1830s. When the property was put up for auction in 1837 it was stated to be in good repair, 'being just completed'. Exactly what 'just' meant, however, is not clear for the same phrase was repeated in 1839 when the tavern came up for sale once again. Further alterations may have taken place when Henry Butt established his Gin and Brandy Vaults in 1849.[41]

Description

The Grapes consists of three historic buildings, two of which are essentially timber-framed, the third, to the west, being of brick. The largest timber-framed range fronts East Street and was clearly domestic. The other range, to the north, fronts the present courtyard and its function is more problematic. The brick range provided additional accommodation and storage.

The main range

The main East Street range is a two-and-a-half storey, two-bay structure, approximately 10.3 m long and 4.8 m wide, aligned parallel to the street. The structural evidence indicates that the upper floors on the south elevation had shallow jetties, cut back when the brick front was added.

The square-panel framing of the three surviving frames (the west gable, cross-frame, and north frame) is of relatively poor quality with timbers of varying scantlings, many of which were clearly re-used. The north post of the cross-frame, for example, is made up of two re-used timbers, one on top of each other.

The west gable-frame has lost its ground-floor section. At first-floor level there are three rows of square panels. The present southern storey-post is a later addition, dating, presumably, from the rebuilding of the south (front) wall in brick. An inserted doorway at the north end has removed more of the framing, but there is no evidence of any primary openings at this level.

The second-floor framing has also been partially removed to accommodate a doorway in the northern side, probably associated with the raising of the adjacent brick building in the early 19th century. At this level there are two rows of panels below the tie-beam of the roof truss. In the truss, four queen-struts rise to a collar, above which a pair of curving 'V'-braces rise to the principals. Between the two middle struts is a surviving two-light primary window with a timber mullion. Evidently, this gable end was external, but there was perhaps a lower two-storey building to the west.

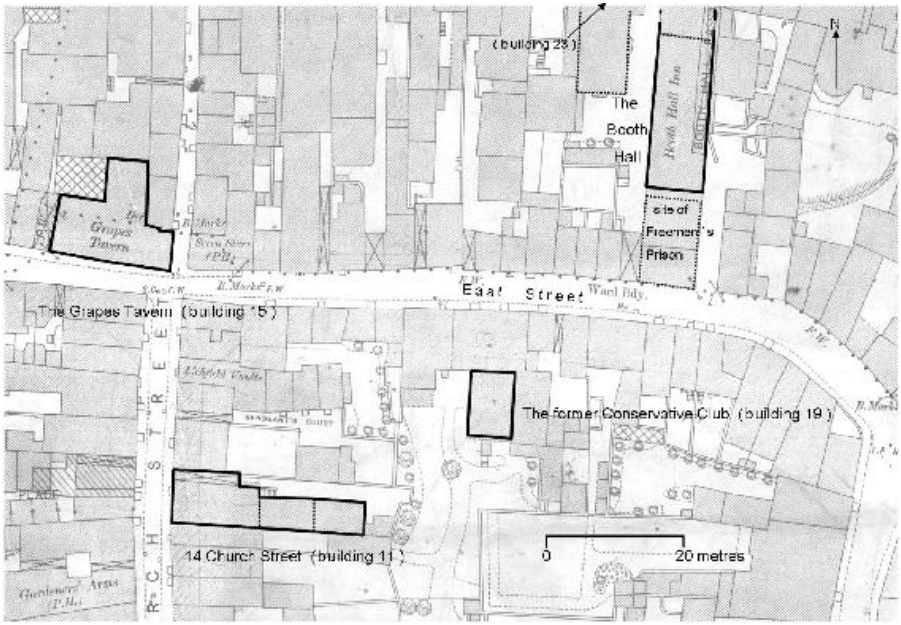


Figure 3.38 East Street and its vicinity: location plan for Building 15 (The Grapes), the former Conservative Club (Building 19) and 14 Church Street (Building 11) based on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1886

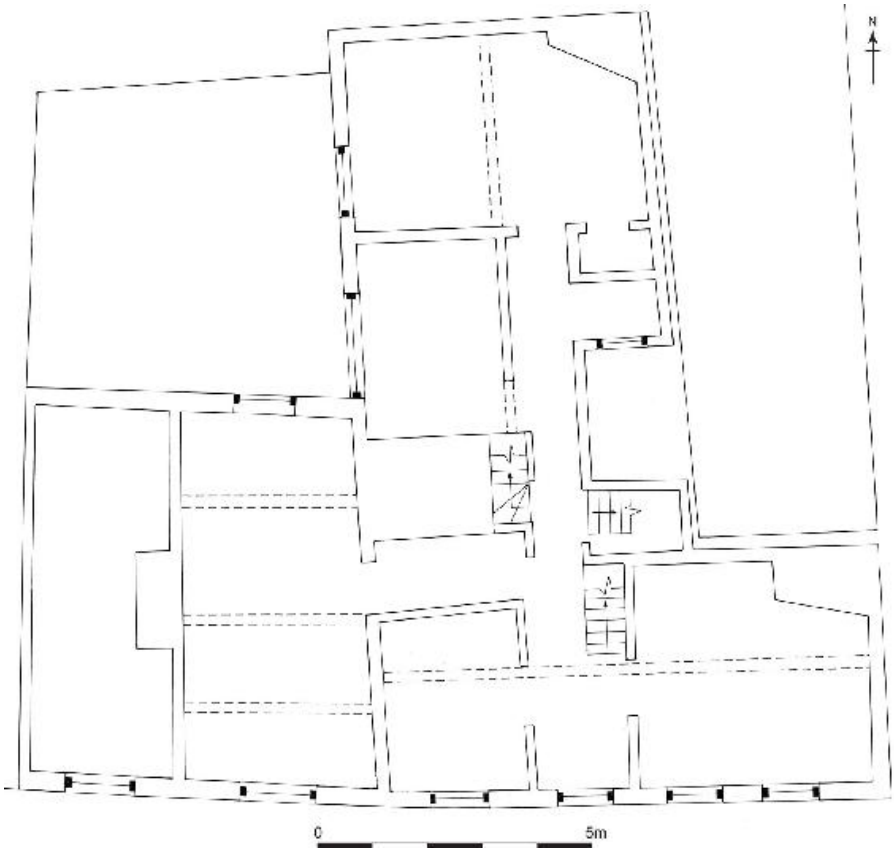


Figure 3.39 First-floor plan of The Grapes. East Street is to the bottom, Capuchin Lane to the right. The great stack (serving the pewterer's hearths) can be seen at the junction of the front and rear ranges

Excepting the loss of its ground-floor framing and minor alterations on the second floor, the surviving intermediate cross-frame is substantially intact. At first-floor level there is evidence for a primary doorway just to the north of the present (inserted) one, as well as another doorway, inserted but then blocked, at the southern end of the frame. The truss tie is interrupted by studs between the girding-beam and the collar. Originally, there appear to have been three of these, asymmetrically placed in the framing; the two southern studs acted as the jambs of a primary second-floor doorway, since blocked but the lintel survives. The northern stud was removed to make room for the present, inserted, doorway.

The northern side frame has been subjected to many changes but its basic design can be deduced. Square-panelled, probably with three rows of panels per main floor, it was not jettied. The wall-plate acts as the ties for two full-height dormer gables, each of which ends in a collared truss. It was difficult to ascertain if there were any primary

windows or doorways in the frame. At the east end is a large brick stack, probably not primary but possibly marking the position of an original one. Although the original east gable wall, overlooking Church Street, was replaced in brick at the same time as the south elevation, evidence within suggests that it was not jettied. If the building was jettied on both south and east elevations, there should have been dragon beams in the floor structure and none exists. It is possible that the framing on these two principal elevations was better constructed than the surviving frames – which were less likely to be visible.

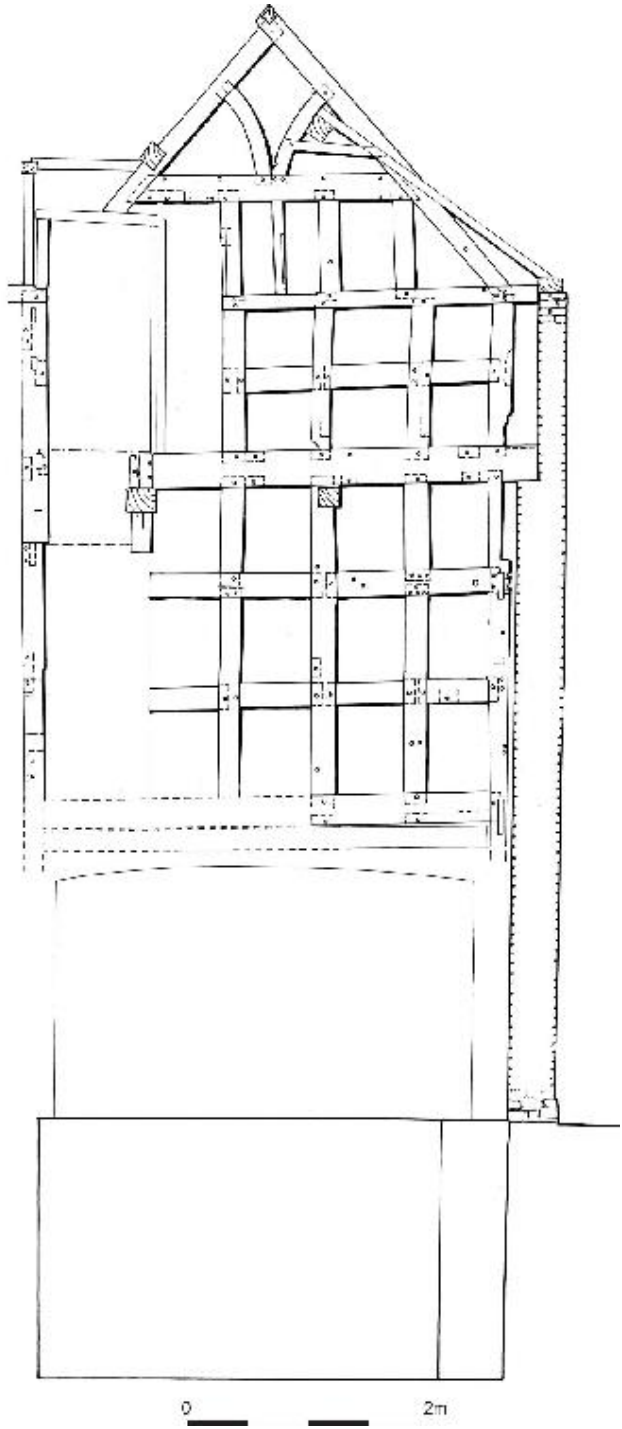


Figure 3.40 The west gable frame of the East Street (front) range of The Grapes, surveyed prior to the building's restoration and showing how the original jetty to the street had been cut back and replaced by a brick facade

Most of the roof structure was removed or radically altered when the second floor was raised in the early 19th century. The main roof was plain-gabled, the rafters supported on a single tier of trenched purlins and a ridge-piece. The full-height cross-gabled roofs seem to have been of similar design. The building is cellared, but there are few historic features visible and the date of the stone lining is unknown.

As built, there appear to have been two rooms of similar size on each floor; the absence of known windows on the main floors in the west gable, and the difficulty of finding any in the north frame, suggests that these floors were lit by windows in the south frame and, probably, in the lost east gable. The second floor was probably lit by windows in the two southern dormer trusses as well as ones in the west and east gables. The eastern rooms were probably heated by an angle-stack in the north-east corner of the building, but it is unclear how the western rooms were heated, unless there was once a missing stack to serve them.

The large stack at the southern end of the courtyard range appears originally not to have had any fireplaces in its southern flank that could have served rooms in this range. The position of the original staircase is also unknown. The eastern rooms appear to have been of higher status, and it is possible that the stair was incorporated into the western bay. Alternatively, there may have been an attached stair tower, now lost, on the north side.

The rear or courtyard range

The courtyard range is built at right-angles to the East Street range but does not quite butt against that building's north elevation. It is of two-and-a-half storeys above cellars and of two-and-a-half bays; it is approximately 10.5 m long and just over 6 m wide. Each of the main bays is about 4 m long, and the short southern bay seems to have been built solely to accommodate a very large primary stack. The framing has suffered some alteration and was partially obscured during the survey. However, it appears to be of plain square panels, the original daub infills having split laths rather than wattles. At the northern end of the side-frames at ground-floor level are straight down-braces from the corner posts to the sole-plates.

The ground-floor section of the north bay of the eastern side-frame has mostly been removed but did not match the western side; it may once have had a window. Its central bay appears to have had no framing at all at this level, suggesting a wide opening. Even though much of the adjacent framing was removed to accommodate a light-well, the chamfer on the girding beam indicates that the opening

occupied the whole bay. There are no indications of openings in this elevation above ground-floor level. In the western side-frame, alterations and inserted windows have removed much of the evidence of original openings, but the internal ovolo moulding of the middle of the first-floor girding-beam indicates a ground-floor window in the central bay. The south gable-frame has been removed entirely, and only the corner posts and truss of the north gable frame survive. The posts have no jowls and support a plain truss with three queen-struts between tie and collar.

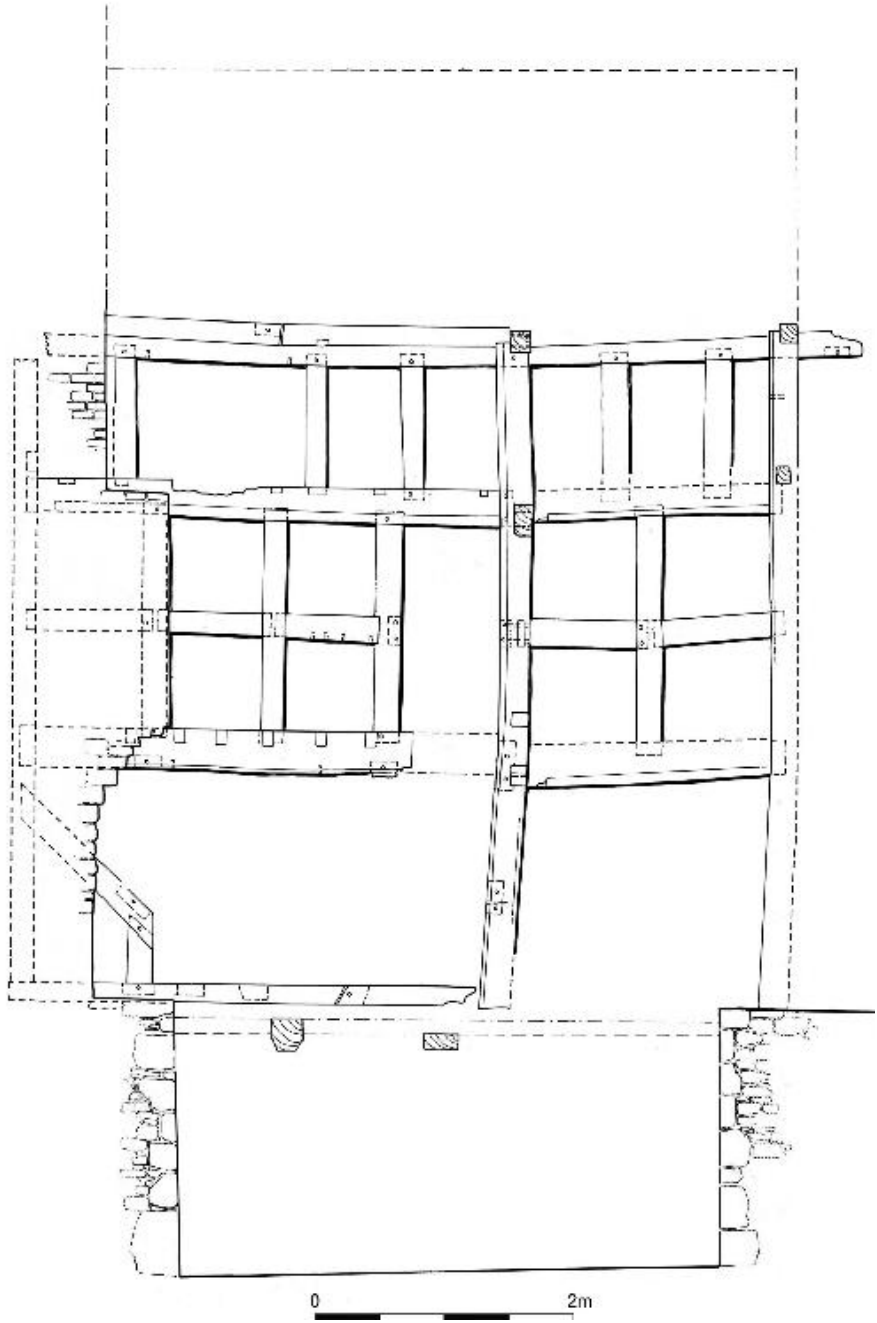


Figure 3.41 The inner face of the northern two-thirds of the east frame of the rear range. The post at the right-hand end belongs to the light-well

The two cross-frames are better preserved, except for the loss of the eastern quarter of the southern frame. At first-floor level there is

evidence for a primary off-centre doorway through the northern cross-frame and there was presumably a similar doorway through the southern cross-frame. At second-floor level studs from the girding-beam to the truss collars interrupt the tie beams and frame primary doorways. The upper floor structures were supported by single plain chamfered spine-beams with the joists running west–east. The roof structure is plain-gabled and the trusses support two tiers of trenched purlins.

The internal layout appears to have been straightforward, with single interconnected rooms in each of the two main bays at each floor level. The original stair appears to have been to the east of the large protruding south stack and parts of it may survive in the stairs between the first and second floors.

Not long after the building was erected a major change was made by the creation of a narrow, timber-framed light-well, just over 1.7 m wide and 4 m long (north–south) in its south-eastern corner. At first-floor level this included a long window in its west wall of at least seven (and probably nine) lights separated by moulded mullions. Its creation led to the removal of part of the eastern side-frame and the southern cross-frame – including the loss of the latter's east principal rafter.

The eastern roof slope of the narrowed southern part of the building was obviously now much steeper than it had been before and a new rafter was added to the original truss. In addition, a new intermediate truss was added between it and the northern cross-frame.

The line of the light-well's western frame was continued northwards to the northern intermediate frame at ground-and first-floor levels, creating small closets between it and the light-well. The original south gable-frame may have been removed at this time, and the lower part of the assumed primary stair was also taken out and the cellar space below the light-well infilled.

Further and equally far-reaching changes were made to the range in the 18th century, when most of the panel infills were replaced in brick nogging, and new windows and doorways were added. The north gable frame was virtually rebuilt in brick and a new angle-stack added in the north-east corner. The first- and second-floor levels in the northern bay were raised, resulting in considerable structural alterations.

Discussion

These two buildings appear to have been in common ownership by the 17th century although they were built as separate structures. Dating either building on such limited evidence is difficult but they appear to

have been built at more or less the same time. The somewhat debased carpentry evident in the shallow-jettied framing of the main range points to a date in the first half of the 17th century, suggesting it may have been the property occupied by Luke Hullet in 1625. It seems to have been a building whose two upper floors were used as a dwelling above a partly commercial ground floor.

Alterations to the south and east walls took place in two main phases, the first probably in the later 18th century (by 1787), when the frames were replaced in brick, the next perhaps early in the 19th century when the brickwork was raised to full second-storey height, possibly after The Grapes had become a public house.

The function of the rear or courtyard building is less straightforward. Its original layout is a little unusual and the head heights in the lower floors rather poor: about 2 m, as opposed to the 2.8 m in the range along East Street. The size and position of the south stack is also difficult to explain in a domestic context, as is the provision of the separate half-bay to accommodate it. In addition, the apparent lack of ground-floor framing in the east wall of the central bay needs to be understood. Based on the structural evidence, an industrial or commercial use seems probable, especially considering the generously proportioned but apparently unlit second storey/attic and the very large stack apparently unconnected to the domestic portions of the street frontage and probably associated with industrial processes.

This would tie-in neatly with The Grapes' known use by the pewterer Francis Trapp, mentioned in 1665, but the building, which seems to have been purpose-built for this trade, is presumably of the first half of the 17th century in date. The stack would have been in the workshop, serving the relatively small furnaces required in the manufacture of pewter goods, and although the precise purpose of the other rooms in the rear wing is uncertain, they appear to have included some domestic accommodation and, in the attic, storage. The creation of a light-well within this rear wing indicates a need to light the interior of the building and could suggest that taller buildings were added immediately to the east of this range, blocking out earlier window openings. The design of the ovolo-moulded window frame is still that of the 17th century, suggesting it was added when it was still a pewterer's. However, it is just possible that the window could have been added after the death of Trapp, in 1689, and associated with some remodelling of the premises by Charles Dyer, a shoemaker. It may also coincide with a general refurbishment of this range and possibly the conversion of its industrial parts to commercial and

domestic use as the premises of mercers. By the later 18th century the buildings had been partly rebuilt and refaced in brick, but only became a public house in the 1820s.

Although somewhat fragmentary, the identification and survival of these small-scale 17th-century industrial premises, including accommodation, workshop and stores, is historically significant and extremely rare, not just in Hereford but in English historic towns more generally.

(16) The Essex Arms (Figs 3.42–3.45)

Introduction

The Essex Arms was surveyed in 1988, shortly before it was dismantled, moved and re-erected (with much replacement timber) to serve as a visitor centre in the Queenswood Country Park on Dinmore Hill, five miles north of Hereford. It was original built outside the city wall towards the outer, northern, end of the Widemarsh Street suburb. This was, until the building of Edgar Street in the 1850s, the principal route into Hereford from the northern Marches, Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Leominster. The suburb was, nevertheless, traditionally a poor one: low-lying, flood-prone and dominated by the tanning industry in the late medieval and early modern periods.

A simple, timber-framed, two-up-two-down dwelling of two bays and one-and-a half storeys, built *c.*1650, of all the houses discussed in this volume, this is the most basic. Its owner-builder can be identified as John Jones, a carrier.

Historical background

The Essex Arms was well beyond the area around the city walls that was cleared of houses by the defenders of Hereford in the 17th-century Civil Wars. It was described as newly erected in 1650 when it was put up by John Jones, carrier, on land acquired from Fitzwilliam Coningsby.[42] It was built on land adjoining the Coningsby Hospital and was surrounded by orchards, which Jones was required to maintain and in which he had to plant more fruit trees.

In 1654, Thomas Preese, servant to John Jones and probably his carter, was accused of withholding 6s 6d, half the payment for the cart-wheels his master ordered from Thomas Davies, wheelwright.[43] However, Jones also travelled with his deliveries himself, and this resulted in some unpleasant gossip concerning his wife Katherine and which also impugned his own honesty, surely a most vital quality for a

carrier. It seems that Benjamin Beddoes, a local glover, and his wife Ann, had been at loggerheads for many months and that Beddoes had finally taken himself off to London. Ann accused Katherine of sleeping with Beddoes before he went away, for 'four nights together … while her husband John Jones was at London.' Ann was brought before the magistrates and bound over for good behaviour – without result. The second time she was arrested she claimed to know the whereabouts of certain jewels belonging to a Mr Tomkins – 'meaneing Jeweles yt were lost when the said John Jones his packs goeing for to London were cutt by theeves upon the high way and robbed', maintaining they had been pawned for £18. The magistrates seem to have recognised that her accusations sprang from malice and she was required to give new bail for good behaviour.[44]

Little or no more useful documentary evidence has been found for the property. It has a rare name for a public house – and one not even mentioned in two of the usual sources for the derivation of pub names (Dunking and Wright 1987; Delderfield 1972). The name presumably relates to Elizabeth I's close associate, Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex – but also the 3rd Viscount of Hereford.

Description

The Essex Arms had been altered and extended in the past but there was sufficient primary fabric surviving to allow a basic understanding of the building. The southern portion was brick-built and probably of early 18th-century date. The section surveyed was timber-framed and of two main phases.

Dating from the mid-17th century, it was a simple building of two bays and one-and-a-half storeys. Much of the east side and south gable frames had been removed. The remaining framing was of wattle-and-daub infilled square panels, three high. Vertical joints were generally single-pegged, and horizontal ones double-pegged. There were straight down-braces on the front elevation from the corner and bay posts to the first-floor girding beam. That beam was interrupted only by the bay post; the lower rail, in contrast, was interrupted by every stud.

The north gable-frame survived and was of square panelling as well, but lacking any braces; the corner-posts were jowled. It did have rather unusual secondary 'jowls' added to the tops of the corner posts, presumably for additional support. There was no evidence of any opening in the frame, which was topped by a closed truss; this had a collar with three queen struts beneath it and a pair of 'V-struts' above. The south gable was presumably similar.

There was a substantial stone stack projecting inwards from the middle of the rear side frame; this partly encapsulated one end of the

cross-frame and intermediate truss and appeared to have been an original feature. The frame was square-framed but incorporated primary doorways against the stack at both floor levels. At first-floor level the door cut through the truss tie and its lintel was formed by the collar.

The roof structure was of two bays and the trusses supported a single tier of plain purlins – without wind-braces – and a ridge-piece. Some of the common rafters could have been primary and it seems that the roof was thatched until the early 19th century. In the west, or front, slope of the roof there were primary dormer gables in each bay. These had small gablets consisting of tie-beams, principals and a king-strut. The common rafters over-sailed the wall-plates and the thatched roof would thus have slightly overhung the street.

The main ground-floor doorway to the building was at the south end of the west frame, the right-hand end of the building as seen from the street. This appears to have been its primary position, judging from the peg holes in the rest of the frame, and the lack of evidence for any other doorway opening on the main elevation.

Figure 3.42 The Essex Arms (Building 16), Widemarsh Street, in 1988, shortly before its demolition and re-location to Dinmore Hill. The timber-framed section to the left probably dates to the mid-17th century whilst the brick-built right-hand portion was added in the 18th century

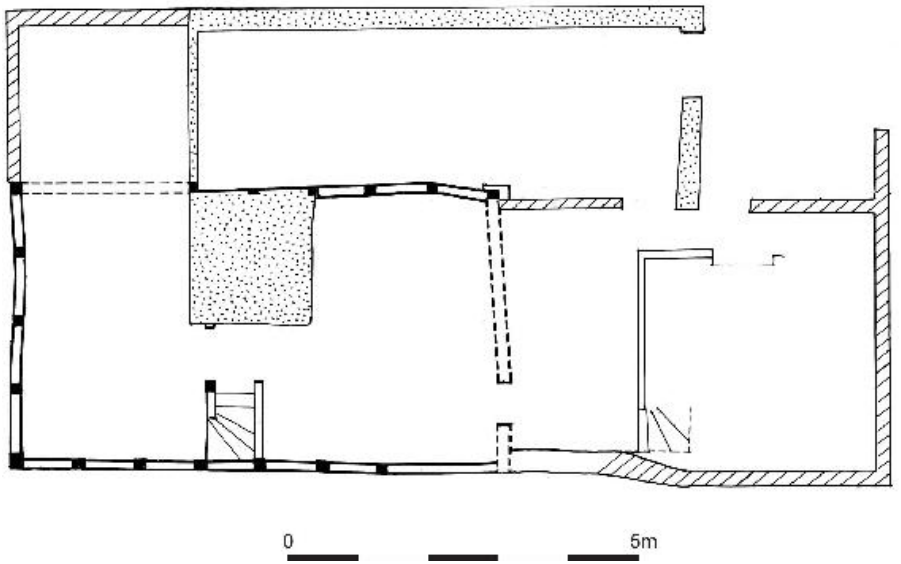


Figure 3.43 Ground-floor plan of the Essex Arms, Widemarsh Street, with two phases of extension to the south (right) and rear/east (top)

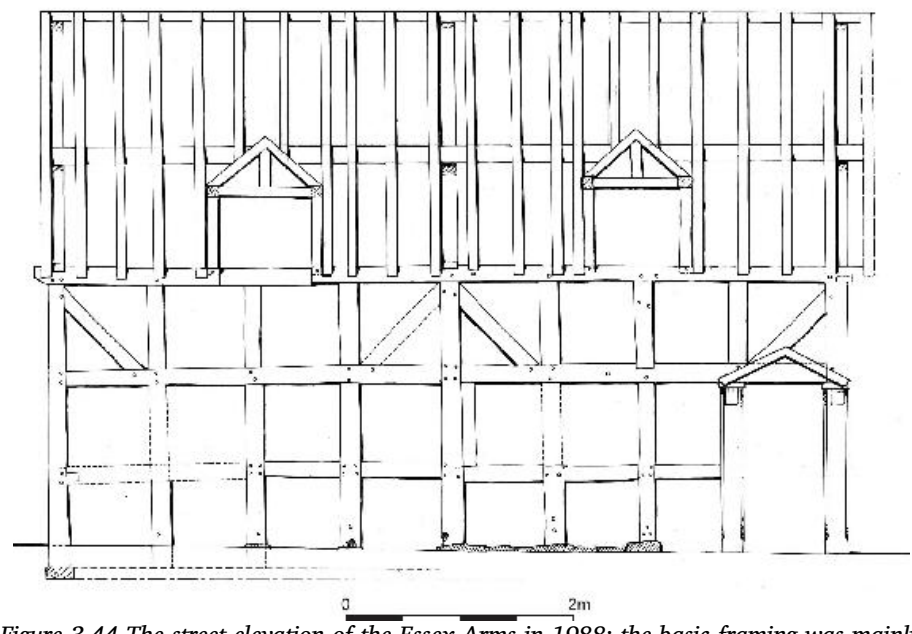


Figure 3.44 The street elevation of the Essex Arms in 1988; the basic framing was mainly intact but the building was in a poor condition

The fenestration had been altered on several occasions but any primary windows were presumably fitted into panels on the upper

ground-floor row, nailed into their apertures rather than being fully integrated into the structure; there were no indications of any dropped sills.

The original layout was fairly simple. There were two rooms on each floor, one to each bay. In between was the substantial stack; it is assumed that each of the ground-floor rooms was heated by a fireplace in its flank. Access between rooms was through the doorways next to the stack and between these and the front wall was a rather cramped stair.

Attached to the east side frame of the building was a much-altered, brick-built lean-to outshut of at least two phases. Although its original northern end wall had a simple half-truss in line with the intermediate frame of the main range, and although both the tie and the principal rafter were tenoned into the side intermediate bay post, it was clear that the outshot was added quite late in the life of the building. Its junctions with the main frame were not pegged and the outshot continued further south than the timber-frame. Its south gable wall butted against the east wall of the 18th-century brick part of the Essex Arms. The roof of the lean-to was contiguous with that of the east or rear slope of the main range, forming part of a catslide roof. Subsequently the property was extended further, or possibly incorporated adjacent brick-built premises to the south; by the early 19th century it was large enough to become a public house.

Discussion

Although now removed and rebuilt elsewhere, the Essex Arms is important in this study as an example of a small, simple, vernacular suburban building of the mid-17th century with an identifiable owner/builder. The simplicity of the framing and the absence of any obviously dateable features made precise dating difficult and the phrase ‘newly erected’ in the lease is equally imprecise. Its original phase was a single build using purpose-cut rather than re-used components, suggesting it was not dismantled during the Civil War in the 1640s, unlike 64–66 Widemarsh Street, much closer to the city wall. Whilst that could suggest it was not considered to be close enough to the defences to be considered a possible vantage point for attackers, being ‘newly built’ in 1650 could also mean that it was built immediately after the conflict.

Probably early in the 18th century the building was extended to the south, although documentary evidence suggests that the extension was initially used as a separate dwelling. By the early 19th century it appears to have become one property, used as a public house. The lean-to extensions attached to its east side were probably associated

with its new use and the needs for more floor space.

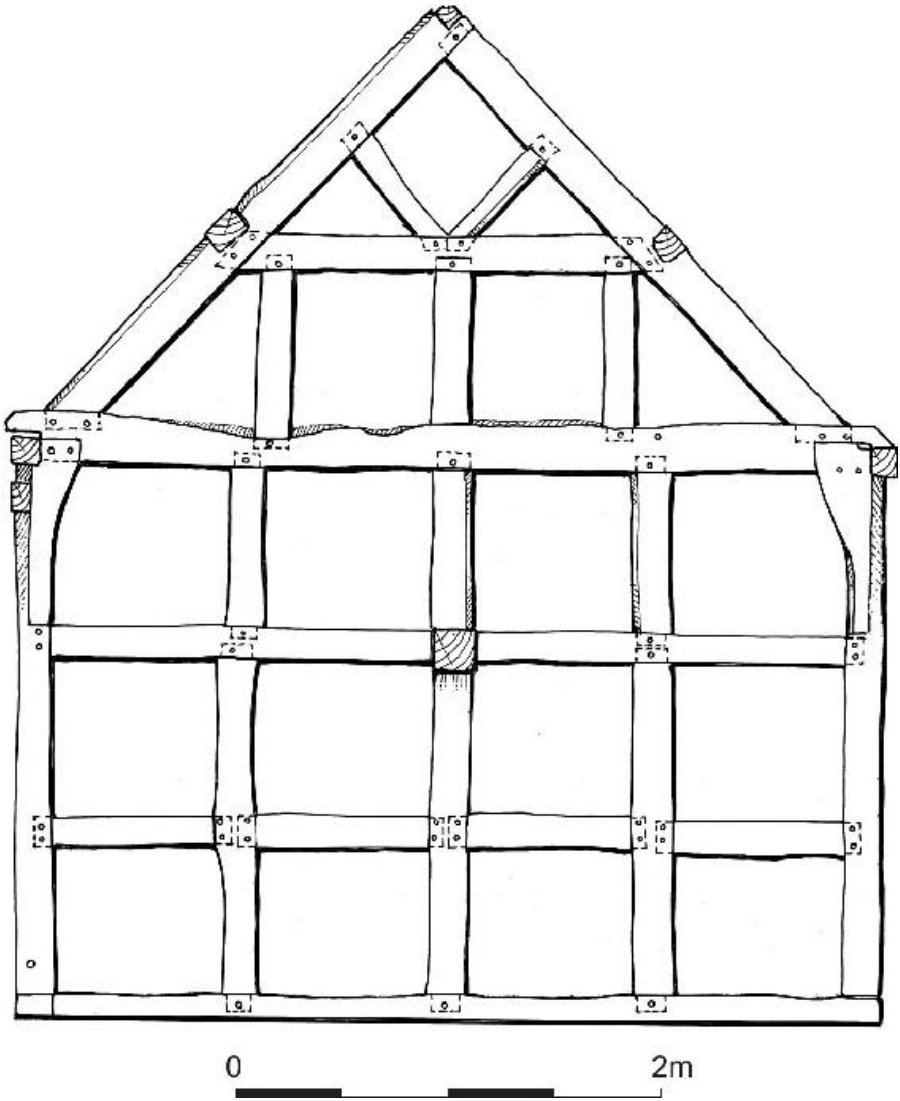


Figure 3.45 The internal elevation of the north gable frame of the Essex Arms, showing the robust simplicity of its design

The dismantling, removal and re-building of the Essex Arms is, in itself, a notable event in the story of historic-buildings conservation in Hereford. Although at the time, in 1988, it was a humble and much-altered building in an unprepossessing situation, it was sufficiently valued to be moved and re-used rather than demolished, echoing the earlier, temporary, moving and conserving of 3 High Street (see p.

167).

(17) The Old House, High Town (Figs 3.1; 3.46–3.49; Plate 24)

Introduction

The Old House is by far the best known of all of Hereford's timber-framed buildings. This is due mainly to its prominent island position at the eastern end of the otherwise open expanse of High Town, and to the fact that it has been a city museum since the 1920s. The Old House is also well known as the sole surviving component of the marketplace encroachment or colonisation that characterised High Town before it was cleared away in the later 18th and 19th centuries. It is, in fact, a classic example of its kind. It is free-standing, surrounded by the High Town market place, without any associated plot; it is also quite probable that the division of the rows between different trades – fishers/butchers and cook-shops – reflects an orderly, officially planned origin and not the surreptitious 'encroachment' process of legend.

The Old House is certainly no market stall. It is a small but finely carpentered Jacobean town house, described by the Royal Commission in 1931 as 'the best preserved example of a timber-framed building in the city' and it is now the only secular Grade I listed building in Hereford. Built for the butcher John Jones in 1621, it is a three-bay building of two storeys plus attics lit by jettied dormer gables; its external elevations are close-studded. It contains a larger and a smaller room on each main floor and its internal arrangements are more or less as they were when it was built. It was thoroughly restored when it became a museum in 1928, in the process becoming home to a number of architectural features taken from other buildings in the city; it shows few signs of its long and chequered commercial history, which ended as a branch of Lloyds Bank.

Historical background (Fig. 3.47)

The problem that faces the researcher when dealing with the Old House is to provide it with an adequate 'address' so that it can be investigated. The leading historians of Hereford, from Duncumb to Watkins, accepted that the row of houses and shops which stood in the centre of High Town, and particularly that end of the row where the Old House now stands alone, was known as Butcher's Row. The full story is not so straightforward, although it is not the buildings themselves that cause the confusion, but the names attributed to them.

Although Taylor's map of 1757 (Fig. 1.4) divided the block into two sections called Cooken Row (facing north) and the Butchery (facing south), at an earlier date the south-facing houses were known as Fisher's Row. Some of them spanned both rows, including the Old House. Comparison of the deeds for the area with the names in St Peter's poor rate assessments which survive from 1696 to 1720, shows that the assessors turned up Cooken Row/Fisher's Row/Butcher's Row and worked their way westwards towards the Market House.[45] In 1694 the layout was something like the diagram below; the thirteen separate properties compare with the seventeen reckoned in the 19th century (Table 3.1).[46]

At the end of the century, the Old House was occupied by Thomas Hussey, who, in 1694, paid for an encroachment – a 'bulke', or stall – outside his house.

If the assessment lists are compared with the 1664 and 1665 Hearth Tax, another pattern emerges (Table 3.2). Among the names is that of John Cule, who not only held the famous Boothall Inn, but was simultaneously landlord of the Ship Tavern in Cooken Row. How he managed both becomes clear when it is realised that the Ship was almost opposite the Boothall.

In 1665, Richard Vincent, a butcher, was assessed for four hearths in what must have been the Old House. The number of hearths, corresponding to the probable number of original hearths in the present house, makes the identification more certain (in 1664, only 15 out of 122 chargeable dwellings had 4 hearths). The previous year saw Mary Jones, widow, and Griffith Greenway, in the same position, each with two hearths. Mary, one of the many 'Jones' in Hereford, appears to be the same as the Widow Jones, butcher, who was fined for allowing her pigs to roam the streets in 1661.[47] Griffith Greenway was probably running the shop on her behalf.

Mary was probably married to John Jones, butcher, who flourished in the first quarter of the 17th century and whose children were baptised in St Peter's church between 1602 and 1609; if this was the case, Mary would have been well into her eighties by the time of the 1664 Hearth Tax. It is to be hoped that, in her old age, she had repented of the action recorded in the Lawday court in 1625 when Mary Jones, wife of John Jones, butcher, was indicted for being:

a comon scould, a drunckard and disturber of her neighbors, and one that is a comon curser swearer and blasphemer of gods name to the disquiett of his majesties subjects and disturbance of his highnes peace within the same Citty.

The bill was found true! A John Jones, probably her husband, was presented in 1628 for owing money.[48]

So could John Jones, whose widow occupied the Old House in 1664, have been the butcher for whom, the iconography tells us, the house was built in 1621? It seems very likely. Allowing that his children were born when he was in his twenties and thirties, he would have been an established tradesman by 1621. In the 1622 lay subsidy roll for Bister's ward, John Jones is recorded as paying 3s, implying that, although not among the wealthiest citizens, he was comfortably off. Moreover, his position in the roll is only one place away from Bartholemew Taylor, who appears, from the other lists consulted, to have lived nearby in High Town.[49] Ten years later, in 1632, John Jones, butcher, was renting a stable and garden opposite the Boothall back gate, in Packers Lane.[50] With no room for such amenities on his limited 'island' site this would have been a convenient addition to his property, particularly if he was on good terms with the innkeeper at the Boothall and could cut through his premises. In the absence of more positive evidence, the argument is not conclusive but it creates a strong presumption in favour of John Jones.

If this is true, it is the more unfortunate to find that the 'rich butcher' described by Alfred Watkins, who 'commandeered a new site at the end of the Butcher's Row in the High Town and set himself to build a house of which he can be proud', was not the sober citizen Watkins envisaged, but a man who owed money to his neighbours and could not control his wife (Watkins 1934a, 3)!

In 1813 a subscription was got up for the taking down of Butcher's Row as part of Hereford City Improvements and the row was demolished about 1825. Only the Old House now stands. It was refurbished by Lloyds Bank in 1882 and given by the bank to the City Council in 1928 for use as a museum.

Description

At first glance the Old House looks to be a splendid and little altered example, inside and out, of a grand Jacobean town house, but this impression is misleading. The present appearance of the building owes much to a radical restoration at the start of the 20th century, followed by several subsequent alterations. Despite this, much of the original fabric does survive intact.

Most of the framing is of oak, except where repairs have been made in a variety of other timbers. Most vertical mortices are single-pegged and horizontal ones double-pegged. The evidence of the peg holes and redundant mortices is of use on the upper floors, as are the carpenters' marks and assembly scratches. The carpenters' marks are best

preserved on the two intermediate frames and are mainly bold and knife-cut. A ‘differencing’ mark of a semi-circle or full circle was used on these frames but marks on the external frames were difficult to identify.

It is a three-bay structure and, technically, of just two storeys. The jettied third storey is above the level of the wall-plates and, despite its height, is made up of tall dormer gables: it is, therefore, an attic. Above this level is a second, upper attic, or cock-loft.

All the elevations are of close-studded framing, though much of the ground-floor framing and the stone plinth on which it sits has been replaced or repaired. The ground-floor windows on the south side appear to be renewed though they are probably in primary openings. The windows on the north side have been repaired but more survives of their primary timbers. There would have been no windows in the gable ends as the house was part of a longer row of buildings. All of the windows have diamond-pattern quarries in lead cames and some of these may be of 17th-century date; others are late 19th-century copies. Each light has a central iron glazing stanchion to which the cames would originally have been fixed by copper wire.

The main door on the south side is protected by a single-storey timber-framed porch that is probably primary. It is close-studded, with a mid-rail, under a plain, pitched roof. The elaborate doorway has a depressed four-centred head with carved spandrels. Above it is a second carved lintel and above that the coat-of-arms of the Butchers’ Guild. In between the two is an iron tethering ring, presumably there for symbolic rather than practical reasons. The projecting bargeboards have elaborate pendants at both feet and apex. A shallow pentice runs all around the building. The sections on the gable-ends are of 20th-century date but the south pentice is shown on early illustrations and could have been a primary feature or an early addition.

Figure 3.46 An artist's (accurate) rendering of the principal elevation of the Old House, now standing alone at the east end of High Town, though formerly part of a row

On the first floor, the principal elevations have a low mid-rail. There are wide, bay windows with shallow projections to each structural bay, each of six lights, including the canted sides. The window framing is richly moulded and the lights are divided by a transom. The projecting sills are each cut from a single timber and are given added support by pairs of richly moulded scrolled consoles or brackets with grotesque heads. The heads of the first-floor windows are protected by the jetties of the dormer gables above.

The symmetry on the north side is interrupted in the middle bay. The bay window is of four lights and is off-set to the west. To its east is a smaller two-light window flush with the framing that lights the modern staircase to the attics. This window has its own lintel set slightly higher than the mid-rail. This double-rail arrangement is also apparent in the ground-floor framing although there is presently no window.

The gable frames at this level are basically close-studded, but the

framing pattern is interrupted by long, straight, down-braces from the corner posts, and the low mid-rail is not continuous. The single inserted windows are early 20th-century copies of the originals in the main elevations; as there is no jetty to protect them, they have integral, hip-ended, miniature tiled roofs.

The main roof structure and the dormer gables are contemporary, and both are part of the original design of the building. The tie-beams of the roof trusses project beyond the wall-plates to support the jettied bressumer of the dormers, and the feet of the principal rafters are deliberately placed a little in from the ends of the tie-beams to avoid the need for too many mortices in the same area that could weaken the timber. This fact, coupled with the need for adequate headroom in the dormer gables and some headroom in the upper attic, meant that the pitch of the main roof was quite steep.

The gable-end trusses have three collars, the lower one being interrupted by close-studding rising from the tie to the principals and middle collar. Between the two lower collars on either gable is an inserted, four-light, projecting bay-window, copying the style of the larger ones of the side frame. This is supported by a single decorated console and is presumably part of the late 19th-century alterations. Between the middle and upper collar are two vertical studs. These frame a pointed quatrefoil created by four concave braces between the collars and studs. This pattern also exists in the dormers, but in those the brace tenons are pegged; the ones in the gable appears to be nailed and so could be secondary – perhaps of the same date as the windows below them and the decorated barge-boards with their ornate pendants.

Figure 3.47 Butcher's Row, by David Cox, c.1820. The Old House (centre) is recognisable from its three gables and close-studded facade

Figure 3.48 The Old House, bargeboard details

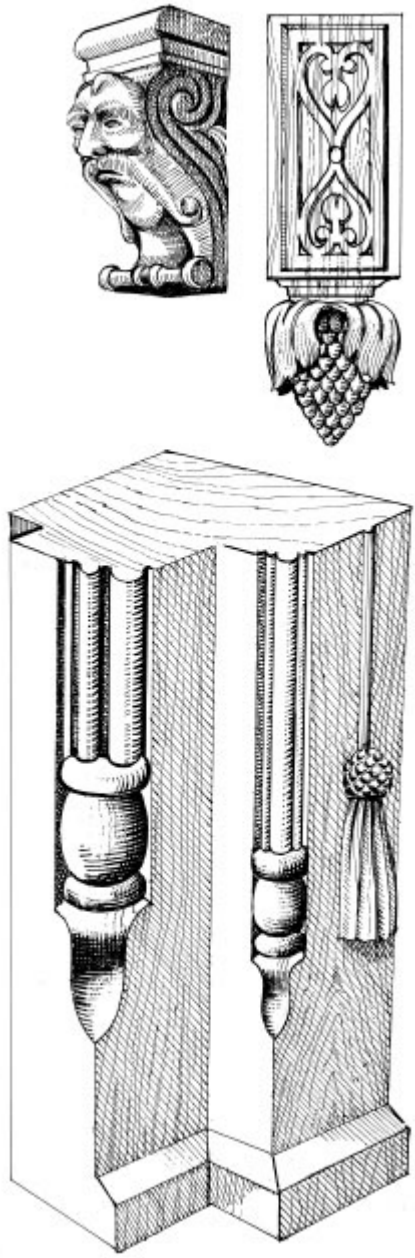


Figure 3.49 The Old House, carpentry details

Table 3.1 Diagrammatic layout for Cooken/Butcher's Row: 1694 Poor Rate Assessment

North (Cooken Row)					
Widow	John		Walter		Old Hse.
Parsons	Maddox	Thomas	Parsons		Thomas
William	James	Hollings Fish&	Thomas	Thomas	
Bond	Barnett	Fish & Bottle	Blunt	Blunt	Hussey
South (Butchers' Row)					

Table 3.2 Diagrammatic layout for Cooken/Butcher's Row: 1665 Hearth Tax.

Charles	John		J.Chamber lain	Old Hse		
Price	Maddox	John		Richard	John	Thomas
Thomas	James		John Cule			
Bond	Barnett	Smith	Ship Tavern	Vincent	Blunt	Blunt
South (Butchers' Row)						

The two intermediate trusses appear to be more or less intact and are of slightly different design. The eastern truss has three collars, the lower one being interrupted by a primary doorway on the north side and a wide opening in the centre associated with the stack. The present door head is the middle collar but the pegged mortices for its original lintel survive immediately below this in the jamb studs on either sides of the opening. Between the middle and upper collar is a single king strut.

The western intermediate truss is very similar and also has a primary doorway through its northern side that has lost its original lintel. It did not have to accommodate a chimney stack in the centre, however, and it does not have an upper collar. Instead, there is a pair of raking struts rising from its 'middle' collar to the principals, clearly intended to allow through access between the two adjacent bays in the top loft.

The trusses support an upper tier of chamfered butt-purlins visible in the top loft and there is probably a lower tier, now hidden, at the level of the wall-plates of the dormers. There is also a fairly substantial ridge-piece. The three dormers on each main elevation are of one period and structurally interdependent. The corners and bay-divisions of the jetty are marked by decorated pendants and carved brackets. The main framing of the dormer elevations is of close-studding with a mid-rail. In between the rail and the gable ties are projecting bay-windows of five lights, smaller versions of those on the first floor and supported by single carved consoles.

On the returns, the side frames of the end dormers are flush with the main end trusses of the roof. The mid-rail continues round to be tenoned into the principal, and is at the same height as the lower collar of the truss. The junction between rail and principal is a little unusual; the mid-rail is wider than the principal. It is tenoned into the principal but the additional width continues until flush with its soffit,

The gables of the dormers are treated differently on the main elevations. The south elevation was clearly the more important. The dormer gables have two collars; in each gable, three studs rise from the tie beam to create two central square panels. These are decorated by concave braces that form pointed quatrefoils (or concave diamonds). The braces in the central gable are cusped to create a

central pattern of spear-tipped crosses. Between the two collars are two-light windows, flush with the framing, lighting the loft.

On the north elevation there is close studding between the tie and the lower collar, with the same windows between it and the upper one. All the dormer gables have richly carved bargeboards that have pendants at the apex and feet, most of these details being modern facsimiles of the originals. The central pendant on the south side is replaced by an angel carrying a shield bearing the date 1621 and that date is repeated on the north side as well.

The dormer roofs have a single tier of purlins, their inner ends resting on the upper purlins of the main roof structure. There is also a ridge-piece which rests on the main ridge. The entire roof is covered with plain clay tiles, probably of late 19th-century date. The top of the large stone stack is of brick. This has been repainted and possibly rebuilt in parts but is probably more or less original as it does appear on early 19th-century illustrations. The bricks are small hand-made reds laid in an English bond. There is a pronounced weathered set-back just above the ridge height to the main square chimney. This has flat angle pilasters at the corners that continue up as miniature towers in the battlemented chimney top. These battlements do not appear on earlier illustrations.

The porch protects the original main entrance to the building. Although the ground-floor portion of the present stack is secondary it replaced the original section which had been taken out when the building was a bank. The entrance was thus an up-market version of a baffle entry, or lobby entry, against this stack, and the evidence of the stair lights in the opposite framing probably indicates that the present stair position between the main floors is a primary one – even though the stairs are modern.

Both ground and first floor appear to have been divided originally into two heated rooms, a two-bay western room and a single-bay room to the east of the stack. Both of the present fireplaces were brought to the Old House from other Hereford houses after it became a museum, and the lower portion of the stack is relatively modern. The fireplace in the main room came from Holmer Hall whilst the one in the smaller room is a late-medieval hooded stone fireplace from 9 Eign Street.

The first-floor bridging-beam in the ceiling of this room is tenoned into the plain-chamfered intermediate posts on either side and has bold, sunk, ovolo chamfers. The two other bridging-beams are boxed steel girders added when it was a bank. The rest of the ceiling pattern

is completed by a pair of moulded axial beams, dividing the ceiling of the room into six panels. The single-bay southern room also has two axial beams.

On the first floor, the original ceiling structure is more complete. In the larger room the bridging beam is actually the tie-beam of the northern intermediate truss. It is supported by the tops of the intermediate posts, which have small internal flared jowls. The beam has the same sunk ovolo chamfer, ending in run-out stops. The pair of axial beams has ogee chamfers and again these divide the ceiling of the main room into six panels. Each of these has moulded plaster frames and bold fleurs-de-lys in their corners.

There are additional ceiling panels over the stairs to the east of the stack and in the passage to the south. The fireplace and elaborately carved Jacobean over mantle are said to be original and would certainly fit in with the given date of the house. As on the ground floor, the smaller southern room also has moulded axial beams in its ceiling. The partition frame between it and the larger room to the west of the stack has been removed. A plan of 1908 shows this floor to have been subdivided at that time into five main rooms, a corridor, larder and WC. Most of the traces of this arrangement have been removed and all the partitions appear to have been inserted.

The attic floor is reached by an inserted stair in the south-east corner of the building. Each of the intermediate trusses on this level was infilled, and they divided the space into three separate, but interconnected, rooms. The middle bay has an axial timber-frame that is probably secondary. Another staircase provides access to the upper cock-loft. Despite the chronic lack of headroom it does seem clear that this was designed to be a useable space. It was well-lit and the raking struts in the upper part of the western intermediate truss allowed access between the western bays. These two bays were probably accessed separately from the eastern bay, because of the existence of the large stack. An oddity at this level are the deliberate narrow gaps in the glass quarries in the windows, one suggestion being that these were for ventilation in an otherwise stuffy loft space.

The main floors have a great deal of early 17th-century decorative wainscot, though much of it appears not to fit very well, suggesting that it has been reset. There is also a sizeable remnant of wall painting in the smaller of the two ground-floor rooms that could be primary.

Discussion

The Old House is a building that has been restored to more-or-less its original layout, excepting the insertion of windows in its gable ends and the creation of its bank-vault cellar. Virtually all traces of the

changes made to it in the three centuries between its completion in 1621 and its conversion to a museum in 1928 have been lost. This does, however, mean that it is one of the very few timber-framed houses in the city centre in which the domestic arrangements of the early 17th century can be observed – though there has been an understandable degree of compromise and invention in its restoration and some features, such as the fireplaces, have come from elsewhere. It is additionally important because careful study of the convoluted tenancies of the market-infill rows has enabled the identification of its owner/builder as John Jones, a butcher, and the inscriptions provide the year of its construction, 1621.

(18) The former Farmers' Club, 131a Widemarsh Street (Figs 3.50–3.56; Plate 25)

No. 131a Widemarsh Street was, until recently, the Farmers' Club, offering hospitality and function rooms right across Newmarket Street from the cattle market established there in 1854. Now in use as a restaurant and re-named the Cosy Club, 131a is a large, partly timber-framed building on the east side of Widemarsh Street, on the Blueschool Street corner. Historically, its site lies immediately inside the medieval city wall, which formed the building's north elevation; this still incorporates patches of original 13th-century masonry amongst later fabric. Until its demolition in 1798, the Widemarsh Gate stood immediately adjacent. When the inner relief road (the ring-road) was built around the city in 1968–69, buildings that had been built up against the city wall were removed, revealing again the Farmers' Club north elevation with its timber-framed gable and masonry below, much as it had been seen in the 18th century (Fig. 3.51).

The house was built in 1617–18 by Thomas Church, a wealthy dyer, whose son (also Thomas) went on to become the royalist Mayor of Hereford during the Civil War. It was a substantial and elaborately timber-framed building. In the southern section, where the original floor-plan is recognisable, there were single, very large, rooms at ground- and first-floor level, with attics above. However, documentation from the middle of the 17th century referring to an entry, hall, kitchen, parlour and shop, is a reminder of how much of the internal planning of the building is now no longer clear.

Historical background

The property formerly known as the Farmers' Club was built on a site belonging to St Giles' Hospital (administered by the Corporation), adjacent to the Widemarsh Gate. When Sir John Scudamore took the

lease in 1601, Thomas Church (I), dyer, and his wife were already tenants of the building.[51]

In 1582, Thomas had 'late erected and builded one newe roome upon your worships ground … next unto the gate of Widmarshe and adjoining to the Town wall of this cittye'; he then asked for permission to make 'one litle doore through the Towne wall to thend the said orator may the better washe his coloured clothes, being necessary unto your said orators said roome'.[52] The new room, presumably Church's dye-house, must have been built right up to the wall so that the door gave direct access to the town ditch and the strip of ground between the ditch and the wall.

In 1618, Thomas (I), described as 'the elder' to distinguish him from Thomas (II), wrote again to the city council, claiming that his house, 'wherein he nowe dwelleth' was decayed and out of repair. It was also dark and he asked permission to put windows through the town wall.[53]

Permission was granted and the house was built with the windows cut through the wall as described and as is shown in later paintings of the gateway area. Dendrochronology dates the felling of the timbers for the frame to 1617 (Tyers 1996), so the permission may have been 'retrospective' or confidently anticipated. The 1626 date-stone with the initials 'T C' over the rear door probably records the completion of this second phase of the house, although the door itself may have already been in place. It is also likely that Thomas II undertook the actual construction of the building and that it is he who is recorded by the initials. In 1628, after Thomas I's death, Thomas II re-applied for the door through the wall and, in return, offered to re-point Widemarsh Gate and maintain the city wall in this area. His petition is prefaced by the statement that 'yo[u]r pctic[i]oner hath a house built uppon part of the Towne wall adioyning to Widm[ar]sh gate'.[54]

This is the house we see to-day, jettied over the city wall, extending the original house into the space formerly occupied first by the 'backside' and then the new room and utilising the stone wall as part of the side wall of the house. Thomas protected his new frontage by a row of posts for which he paid a fine to the city council in 1627.[55]

The little that is known about the first Thomas Church is hardly to his credit. In 1619 he was accused of beating and abusing his apprentice, Thomas Lucas, and of preventing him from completing his indentures. He was also accused of being malicious and vindictive.[56] Despite being implicated with his father in beating Thomas Lucas, Thomas II became a noted member of the city council and Mayor in 1636.[57] He occupied the house during the difficult days of the Civil

War when the city was besieged and the Parliamentary forces sent cannon balls through the Widemarsh Gate to scour the street (Shoesmith 1992, 56). As a royalist, he was fined £10, a relatively modest sum, by Colonel John Birch during his governorship of the city.[58]

Ann, widow of Thomas (II) paid Hearth Tax on six hearths in the building in 1662. Her great grandson Thomas (V), who, like his ancestors, Thomas (II), Thomas (III) and Thomas (IV), was Mayor of Hereford, took out a lease of the property in 1762 claiming that the house was built by his great-grandfather (i.e. Thomas II). This 18th-century lease not only confirms Thomas II as the builder of the property, but also offers an unusually detailed account of the premises. It describes how Thomas II extended the house from its original form to the present, enlarged, accommodation, implying that the old building was incorporated in the new:

All that Capital Messuage … adjoining unto the east side of Wide Marsh Gate, within the said City of Hereford which said Messuage did formerly consist of and contain in it One Entry One hall One Kitchen One Parlour One Shop and are now converted into One Entry One Hall One Kitchen and One other Room together with a stack of Chimneys and a Staircase together also with the Cellars that are under and all Chambers Rooms and Garrets that are over the said Rooms.[59]

The extended house occupied the whole space leased to the family by the city, plus additional land, described as Thomas Church's freehold. This had been bought by Thomas Church I in 1588/89[60] and included the dyeing house and the stable and garden 'with a little lane leading into the said garden and a small plot of land below the gate called Widemarsh Gate'. In addition, the family had two houses outside the town gate and more garden space there. They must also have leased the room over the Widemarsh Gate. The gable adjacent to the gate was extended to allow access between the two buildings. The doorway in the end of the gable can be seen in some of the paintings of the demolition of the gate in 1798, and there is still a visible difference in the shape of that particular gable.

The Churches remained the tenants until the 19th century. Later occupants included two schools, at one of which the water-colourist David Cox was employed. Alfred Watkins also attended the school and blamed the headmaster, the Reverend Bowell, for damage to plasterwork and panelling in the building. The next owner, a Mr Colt Williams, an Inspector of Schools, undertook considerable restoration in the last years of the 19th century. In addition to repairing the

building and uncovering the original fireplace, he added various touches of his own. The inscription over the fireplace is his, as are the carved pilasters in the hall, which he found in a cabinet-maker's warehouse; Watkins thought they probably came from St Peter's church. Watkins also believed that Williams had removed panelling, which he remembered from his school-days in the house, from the rooms upstairs. Williams was not, however, responsible for the loss of the 17th-century staircase, which Watkins saw and mentioned in his tour of the building in 1920 (Watkins 1920). Mr Colt Williams' final touch has baffled historians and provided a fruitful source for modern legend. The painted decoration and royal initials on the gables are not a legacy from the royalist Thomas Church, attractive as the idea is, but merely one of Mr Williams' fancies!

Description

The initial impression of 131a Widemarsh Street, seen from the corner of the street (from north-west), is of a complicated building of at least three historic elements. On the Widemarsh Street elevation, the southern two-thirds consists of timber-framing above a stone-faced ground floor, the double-dormered second, or half-attic, floor being jettied. The remainder of this elevation is set back at a slight angle to the road and is of worked stone beneath a plain gable. On the Blueschool Street return, the lower section is of stone, the upper of timber-framing below a broad, jettied, gable-truss. Much of the lower part of the rear, or east, elevation is obscured by modem accretions, but it is topped by four distinctive timber-framed gables.

As in so many cases, this initial impression is misleading. The structural evidence, particularly within the roof, in the alignment of axial floor beams and the consistency of floor levels, demonstrates that despite incorporating elements of earlier structures and being subsequently altered, the building is largely the result of a single campaign of construction, presumably designed to maximise the available space.

The building had to respect the Widemarsh Street gatehouse and part of the medieval city wall, and made structural use of both. The remains of the medieval defences, fossilised within the building, are obviously its oldest portions. The off-set and set-back masonry at the north end of the Widemarsh Street elevation is the former east gable wall of the gatehouse. Much patched, it is faced in well-coursed and worked grey sandstone. At ground-floor level there is a wide, square-headed opening inserted in the mid-20th century leading into a shallow foyer, now the main entrance into the building.

At first-floor level are two square-headed windows, also inserted;

there are no indications of any primary openings in the masonry. Just above the window lintels the character of the masonry changes. The grey stone gives way to a lighter-textured and less well-worked stone with some blocks of brown or red. The window in the gable appears to be contemporary with this upper masonry and has a stone flat-arched head. It may be of *c.*1800 or after, and would date the rebuilt upper portion of the walling.

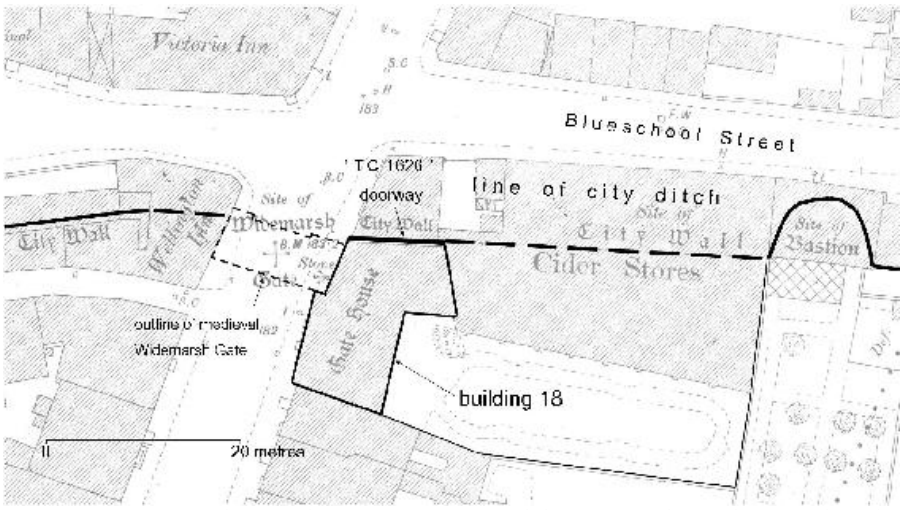


Figure 3.50 Location plan for the former Farmers' Club, 131a Widemarsh Street, based on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1886

The short section of the former city wall incorporated into the north gable of the building has been considerably altered over the years. The critical portion of it abutting the probable gable-end of the gatehouse has been replaced in the recent past, making a proper understanding of the original relationship impossible. The surviving masonry rises up to the mid-first-floor level of the present building; the original, probably 13th-century, city wall fabric is at ground-floor level and consists of large, square, sandstone blocks alternating with much thinner 'levelling-up' courses. The wall incorporates one large, inserted, square-headed, ground-floor window at the west end, and a small pedestrian doorway further east. This doorway has a plain ashlar surround with a depressed four-centred head. In this are the initials 'T C' and the date, 1626. The doorway was inserted into the masonry of the city wall. In the adjacent walling are intriguing traces of former openings, as well as, at first-floor level, a series of blocked inserted slots once taking the joists of a building added onto the north side of the wall and demolished *c.*1968 when Blueschool Street was

widened as part of the construction of the inner relief road.

Figure 3.51 Widemarsh Gate c.1795 by George Samuel. The building known in the 20th century as the Farmers' Club stands to the left of the gatehouse

The remaining section of masonry, on the southern two-thirds of the Widemarsh Street elevation, is of ashlar. It is quickly apparent, once inside the building, that this is a late under-building of the original first-floor jetty of an otherwise timber-framed structure. The four contemporary window openings in this walling (one of which was clearly once a doorway and still retains its hood) are matched by four inserted windows in the framing at first-floor level. There was evidently a major re-facing and modernisation of the exterior of the building sometime in the 18th century, probably associated with the plastering-over of the upper framing.

The design of the original timber-framing of the main building is of one period but necessarily of two halves. The southern half appears to have been built on an unrestricted site. This was probably created by demolishing all the existing buildings and including any part of the back-land not previously built on. The design of the northern half had to accommodate the east end of the gatehouse and the city wall.

The southern portion was virtually square in plan and of two bays. Much of the internal evidence is covered-up, but the construction techniques do seem to have been particularly ambitious. On the west

elevation, facing Widemarsh Street, the framing was jettied at first- and attic-floor levels. The moulded first-floor bressumer is still *in situ* though partially obscured by the masonry below it. There were presumably once the same type of pendants dropping from it as those that survive below the second-floor jetty. The basic framing pattern of this part of the building was of close-studding, apparently with a twin mid-rail.

There were probably large cross-mullioned windows in each of the two bays at both ground- and first-floor levels, along with a primary doorway off the street. The two dormers of the second floor or attic are also close-studded. The 'mid-rail' of this section of framing acts as the combined tie-beam of the two dormer gables. Their casement windows probably reflect the original fenestration, the tie acting as the window-sill, the collar as the lintel. Above the collar each gable has curving 'V-braces' to the principals. The cross-gabled roofs project far beyond the wall line, allowing for more display in the form of pendants at the feet of the barge-boards. The present black-and-white appearance of the framing and the painted decoration of the panel infills is of late 19th- and 20th-century date. The overall design of the roof structure is discussed below.

On the east elevation much of the framing is obscured and sections may have been rebuilt in brick. There are two jettied dormer gables in this half of the building matching those in the west slope of the main roof. The gables of these dormers are slightly simpler versions of the two on the west side, with widely set studs and straight, rather than curving, 'V–braces'.

The south elevation of the building is mainly hidden by a taller, late Georgian block. Evidence within the roof structure indicates that the former Farmers' Club had been taller than an earlier building on the site. The southern end of the building was meant to be seen at attic level: it was expressed as a pair of identical gables, probably close-studded and certainly with a pair of curving 'V-struts' above the top collars. The eastern gable was the end of the main roof, whilst the western one was the end of a cross-gabled dormer, cross-gabled from the southernmost of the western dormers.

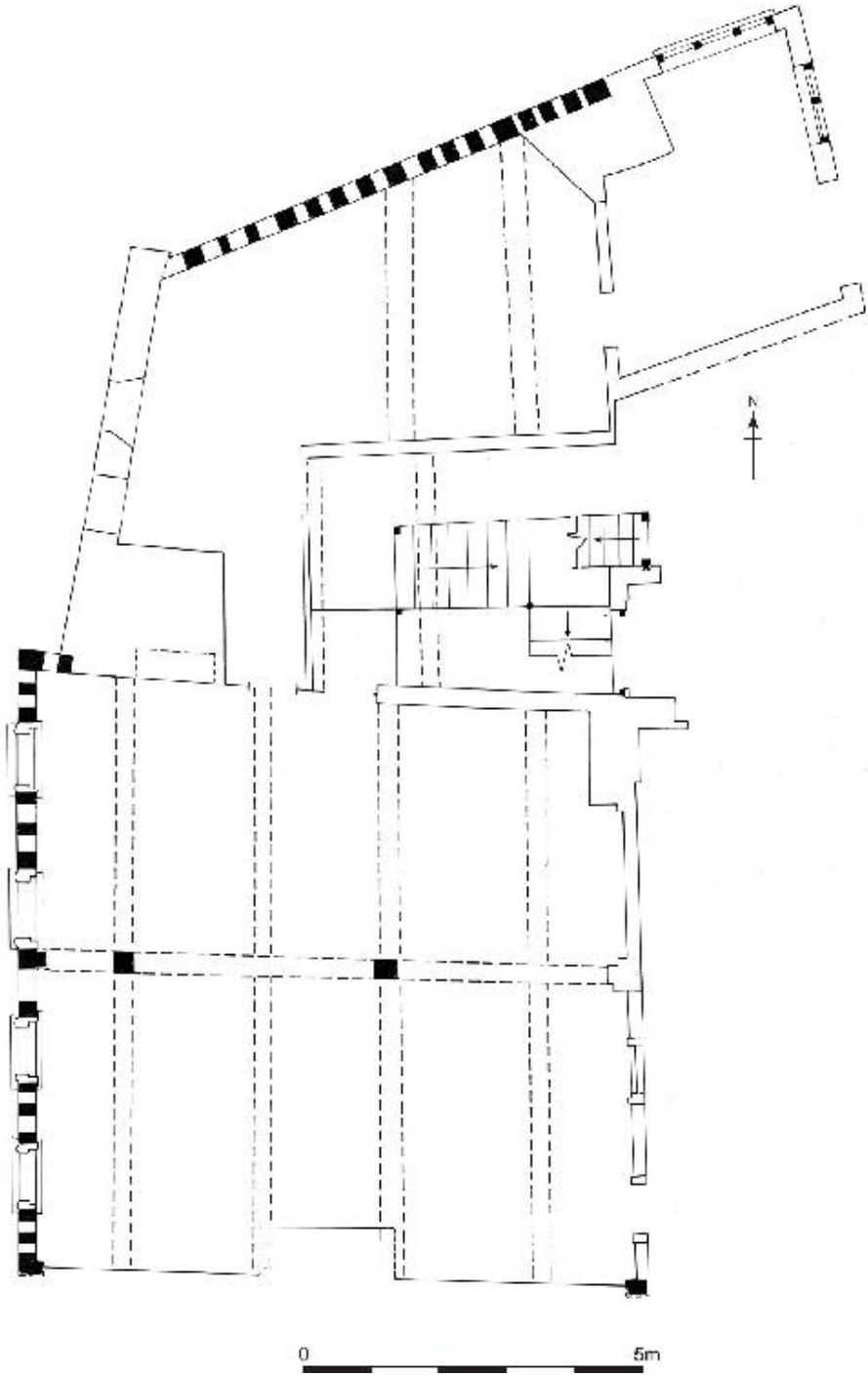


Figure 3.52 First-floor plan of the former Farmers' Club on Widemarsh Street showing the two basic components: a northern section whose plan is dictated by the position of the former Widemarsh Gate adjoining its west side and the city wall extending north-east; and a virtually square southern section on a 'normal' burgage perpendicular to the street

Figure 3.53 The main Widemarsh Street elevation of the former Farmers' Club: the south end of the building, within the former Widemarsh Gate

Internally, the southern half of the building seems to have consisted of a single, huge, room on each of the main floors. The cross-frame between the two bays is open at each level and seems always to have been so. The first-floor structure is supported on three substantial axial beams, visible as ceiling beams from the ground floor, and the second-floor structure has four such beams. The ceiling beams of the ground-floor rooms are boxed, but those of the first-floor room are not. The axial beams and the cross-frame bridging-beam have ogee (or *cyma*) chamfers. The visible wall-plates in all four walls are simply chamfered with lamb's tongue stops at the corners and where the axial

beams join them. It is possible that the more elaborate mouldings are the result of re-cutting of the original chamfers, perhaps as part of a major redecoration of the building.

The ground-floor room is now partitioned but appears to have been, initially, one room. Parts of it are wainscoted, though this mainly seems to be of early 18th-century date with tall upper panels above a low dado. The fluted Corinthian pilasters seem to be later still and may be of the 19th century. All of the wainscot could have been added at virtually any time in the past, either reset from elsewhere in the building or imported from elsewhere. A piece of strapwork frieze at the base of the stairs includes the initials 'TIC' – possibly those of one of the several Thomas Churches associated with the property.

On each of the principal floors there is a fireplace towards the west end of the north wall. At ground-floor level the stone fireplace has a depressed four-centred head in a square-headed moulding; its over-mantle incorporates early 17th-century wainscot, including fret-work and compass-mouldings, but the mantelpiece appears to be 18th-century or later. At first-floor level the fireplace is of a simpler design but of the same period. Central to the south wall is a projection into the room that appears to be a chimney stack. This is panelled in both rooms and it difficult to assess its date. In the attic the stack is of brick.

The northern half of the building could not be of a regular shape because of the existing defences. The east (or rear) wall of the southern section was continued as far as the inside of the city wall. The west elevation had to be stepped back to accommodate the eastern part of the gatehouse, and the builders seem to have utilised it in the new build. Only in the attic is any visible framing evident, abutting the earlier masonry. Similarly, at the north end, the existing masonry of the city wall was used to form the lower section of the building's north gable – even though this meant that this gable was not perpendicular to the side walls, although the axial beams within clearly are.

Figure 3.54 The rear, or eastern, dormer-gabled elevation of the former Farmers' Club. The taxi is parked (in the 1980s) in the middle of what would have been a busy dye-house yard in the 17th century

Above the stonework, the upper part of the first floor and the attic floor above are of close-studded timber-framing. The sole-plate of the framing is placed directly on top of the masonry and the attic gable is jettied. The jettying is supported by the corner posts as well as by three intermediate brackets rising to the ends of axial beams. The fact that these are all at a slight angle to this elevation indicate that they belong to the overall new build, rather than to an earlier phase that would have probably been built at right-angles to the wall. The broad gable-truss above has a two-light casement that may once have been wider. A low collar acts as its sill, a high one its lintel; above the latter is a pair of curving 'V-struts' to the principals. On either side of this end of the roof are cross-gabled dormers, one being blind, ending in the rebuilt masonry of the former gatehouse, the other being the last in a series of such gables on the east elevation of the building.

The interior of this part of the building has suffered considerable change since it was first built, and few of the features within it are primary – making analysis difficult. The principal staircase only rises to the first floor, the section up to the attics having been added earlier last century. The stairs are of good quality and probably date to the first half of the 18th century – perhaps of the same period as some of the wainscot seen on the ground floor.

The building is very wide, particularly in its southern half, and the design of the roof must have caused some problems. A double-pile parallel to the street could have been adopted, or perhaps four parallel roofs perpendicular to it – creating a not-dissimilar appearance to the present arrangement. Neither of these options was chosen. Instead, there is one main roof run, parallel to Widemarsh Street but covering the eastern half of the building from north to south. At right angles to this are the cross-gabled roofs ending in the dormer gables on either side. The main roof is fairly simple in design and of four bays of slightly differing lengths. This was necessary because of the plan of the northern part of the building. The gable trusses have been described. There are doorways through the intermediate trusses flanked by queen-struts interrupting a lower collar and rising to an upper one – the latter forming the lintel to each of the openings. The trusses support a single tier of trenched purlins, necessarily high to allow access into the dormers. The attic is now ceiled at the level of the purlins. Some of the common rafters in the roof structure may be primary but could not be examined in great detail; they meet at a primary ridge-piece.

Figure 3.55 Surviving decorative jetty bracket in the west frame of the former Farmers' Club

The tie-beams of the main trusses are continued to the west elevation and act as sole-plates for the side-frames of the cross-dormered western gables. Their wall-plates are tenoned into the principals of the main trusses at the level of their lower collars. The dormer gables have a single tier of purlins and a ridge-piece, and some of the common rafters may be primary. The dormer gables are longer on the western side of the roof, for obvious reasons. To assist in supporting the purlins, the two in the southern half of the building have an additional inner truss on the line of the foot of the main roof to provide additional support for their own single tiers of purlins. The rafters of this truss have simple bird's-mouth joints with the dormer's wall-plates.

In the northern half of the roof, the bay divisions in the roof structure were complicated by the shape of the building and the pre-existing medieval gatehouse. In the main roof structure a basic pattern was retained, even though the angles meant that the northernmost dormer gable of the east side was necessarily wider than any of the others, and the one to its south was slightly narrower. On the west side, the gatehouse meant that only a shorter, single, cross-gabled roof could be added, and even this was effectively bisected by the main northern cross-frame. The truss of this roof survives, butted against the inside of the present masonry. It was once a full truss, with infilling in its panels, but there is evidence that it contained a primary doorway, presumably leading into the upper part of the gatehouse; that doorway's threshold was the collar of the truss.

Discussion

This very well-documented house remained in the hands of the Church family for over two centuries. Their interest in the property commenced with its lease from the City in 1582 by the first Thomas Church, a dyer, seeking to make use of the flow of water in the town ditch; he extended the property by purchasing adjoining land parcels in 1588–89. Dendrochronology yields a date of 1617 for the timbers of the main body of the present building, though contemporary documentation is mostly concerned with its relationship to the city wall, with requests for permission to insert a doorway through it in 1582 and 1628, and windows in 1618. The lease of 1762 implies that the accommodation built by Thomas Church II in the mid-17th century, consisting of an entry, hall, kitchen, parlour and shop, had by then been extended considerably to provide chambers, with improved heating and a better staircase.

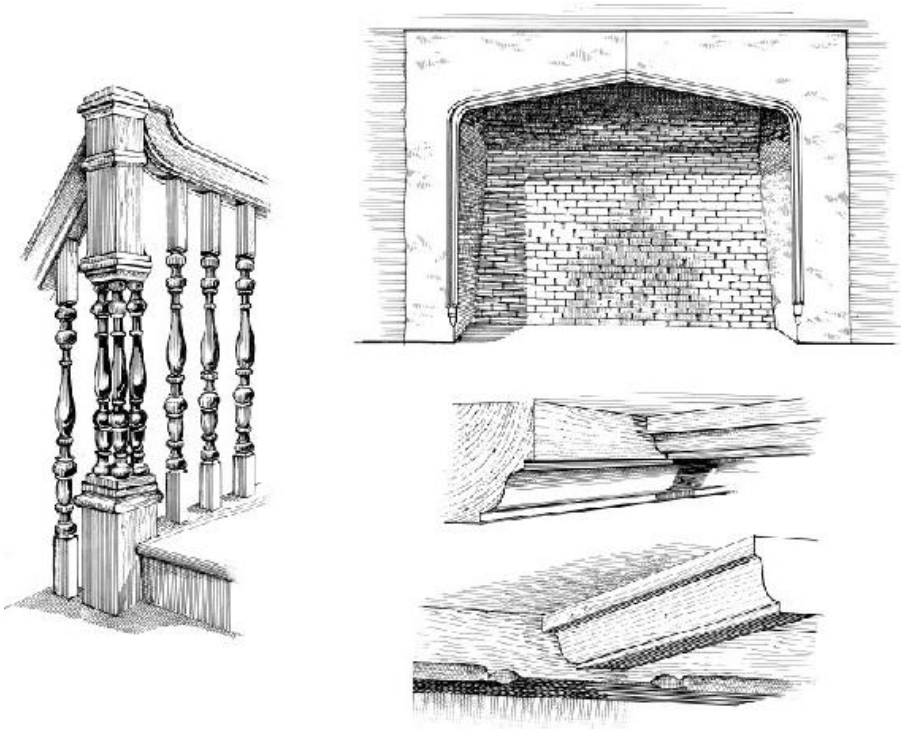


Figure 3.56 Details of staircase, fireplace and ceiling beams in the former Farmers' Club

Overall, the structural evidence indicates that the main timber-framed carcass of the present building was the result of a single campaign of construction, of early 17th-century date, consistent with the tree-ring dating of the frame timbers to 1617. The southern half of the building appears to have contained, at ground- and first-floor level, the two principal rooms. The layout of the rest of the building is less certain, except in the attics. At that level, a timber-framed partition under the west purlin of the main roof may have been an early insert. The present stairs may occupy more or less the position of the originals, but the position of what seems to be a primary stack in one corner of the two main rooms seems a little odd – though as demonstrated by those in Wyebridge House (Fig. 3.36), by no means unique.

There appears to have been a major modernisation of the house in the early years of the 18th century, though this process may have taken some time. The chief external change was the under-building of the portion of the Widemarsh Street elevation south of the gatehouse in ashlar. This was accompanied by a new pattern of windows at ground- and first-floor level to create the impression of an up-to-date, four-bay, early Georgian house. At this time the rest of the elevation was probably plastered or stuccoed. Internally, the staircase and much

of the ground-floor wainscot is of this period, though their provenance is not precisely known. Also, the ceilings may have been re-plastered and, possibly, the mouldings on the axial ceiling beams re-cut to a *cyma* chamfer.

The demolition of the gatehouse at the end of the 18th century would have made the rebuilding of the northern part of the west elevation necessary, which probably accounts for the difference in the character of the masonry visible from outside. Later changes in the 19th century were mainly internal and decorative, and this process continued well into the 20th century. The date of the insertion of pillars to support the elongated tie-beams of the trusses is unknown, as they are boxed. Similarly, repairs have had to be made to the ties in places. It is surprising that they lasted for such a long time without support, given the rather odd design of the roof structure.

The former Farmers' Club is an exceptional early 17th-century building that was obviously of high status within the contemporary city, built by a family repeatedly holding mayoral office. Despite the restrictions imposed by its oddly shaped, confined plot, and the difficulties of accommodating the existing medieval defences – not just the angle of the city wall, but the Widemarsh Gate itself taking up some of the frontage – the builders managed to produce one of the city's finest timber-framed town-houses.

(19) The former Conservative Club, 101–102 East Street, (Figs 3.38, 3.57–3.60; Plate 26)

Introduction

The former Conservative Club is a large multi-period building on the south side of East Street, mid-way between Church Street and St John Street. On the frontage is a Georgian brick house, recently restored, its ground floor occupied by the Cherry Savidge dress shop, with private flats above. However, behind lies an earlier rear range, notable not just for its timber-framing but for the quality and exuberance of its internal plasterwork. The original building was probably erected in the late 16th century for a wealthy brewer, John Vicaries (d.1589). Little is known about it, except that it had single, large, rooms in this rear wing at ground- and first-floor level. The fabric of this phase was mostly concealed by one or two phases of alteration in the following century, comprising the addition of attics with dormer gables, and, mid-century, the creation of fine plaster ceilings in the two principal rooms.

The building occupies the only substantial plot in this part of the street, which to this day retains much of the service-lane character inherited from the Middle Ages. Its western boundary is formed by the common rear boundary of the Church Street plots; to the south lie the canonical plots around the cathedral; to the east, the St John Street plots.

Historical background

The title deeds for the Conservative Club (before that, the Constitutional Club) only go back as far as the mid-18th century and the earlier history has had to be taken from the rather sparse material in the records of the Vicars' Choral of the Cathedral, who owned the adjacent property to the east.[61] Much of this property was in use as stables, described as being in Packers Lane, the old name for East Street and West Street, 'at the Boothall back door'; the 17th-century city courts were constantly presenting the owners for leaving muck and making dunghills in the lane.[62] In 1618, the two stables nearest the present Club were granted to Thomas Symonds and were described as having a tenement belonging to Jane Vicaries, widow, on the west and stretching from the lane to Jane Vicaries' bakehouse. This implies that Jane's garden continued behind the stables, which is not the case today.[63] Jane was the widow of John Vicaries, a wealthy brewer, who, when he died in 1589, left his property to his son,

Thomas, after his mother's death. It is likely that John was responsible for the 16th-century section of the building. His will itemises the fixtures in the house which he felt were particularly valuable, 'all wainscot, benches, formes, table bordes, portalls, stooles, glasse, furnesses, leades, brewinge vessels, a joined presse and such necessarie implements and painted clothes now in my dwelling howse'.

In making this list he included not only the brewing plant that would be part of his son's livelihood, but the built-in furnishings that made the house a high-class dwelling. Such a detailed list is unusual and reflects the importance that he attached to the panelling and joinery in his hall.[64] Jane continued the brewing business and appears in the 1591 Lawday presentments for brewing metheglyn (mead flavoured with herbs) 'against the statute'.[65]

Evidence that the plot stretched back to gardens in St John Street comes in 1636, from an entry in the Lawday Court papers, in which Lawrence Wellington, the next occupant, claimed, unsuccessfully, that an apple tree was within his property, while Morgan Taylor, in St John Street, who shared the boundary, maintained that it was in his garden.[66] By 1732 the site was in multiple tenancies, probably a house and several stables. It was then called or known as the Posthouse. At present there is no information as to whether this was an inn or perhaps an early post office.[67]

A description and plan of the house made in 1833, when the then-owner, Robert Minton junior, tailor, went bankrupt and moved out, lists a messuage or dwelling-house with a yard, garden and outbuildings, and also two messuages and dwelling houses 'lately erected' on the site of a stable. The house furthest east consisted of a shop with a kitchen behind, and a shed across a little yard. The central one had a kitchen fronting the street and a parlour which had been part of the main house. Subsequent developments have confused the layout of the house still further and the 19th-century accommodation of one house included 'the back parlour sometime since taken from the said messuage and lately occupied by him with his dwelling house on the East side of the same messuage and also part of the wine vault under the said parlour …'. This back parlour may have been the 17th-century hall.[68]

Edward Pritchard, solicitor, moved into part of the house in the mid-19th century and seems to have raised the status of the building and bought up portions of gardens from his neighbours to enlarge his own garden. The house later became a school and then a solicitor's office before being sold to the Conservative Club in 1887.[69]

The various alterations that subsequently took place, largely to the rear of the building, are documented in plans submitted to the Council. However, details of the alteration of the 18th-century facade with its heavy cornice, probably from the building's time as a club, have not been traced.

Description

The internal decorative finishes, together with the external render and roughcast, made a full understanding of the early rear range difficult when the building was first surveyed. None of the framing was visible from the outside and only the upper bay posts were visible within the building below attic level. Fortunately, enough of the fabric could be seen to demonstrate that there were two phases of construction before the middle of the 17th century, a conclusion that was confirmed and amplified by further investigations when the building was undergoing restoration in 2013.

This rear range is aligned at right-angles to East Street and is of three bays and two storeys with attics. There is a large stack in the central bay on the east side. Each bay is topped by a dormer gable on both side elevations; only those on the west side are readily visible from the outside, although the others are accessible from within the attics. Closer examination of the fabric shows that these gables are secondary. The fact that the main axial beam is not central to the building but slightly offset to the east, coupled with the fact that the ground-floor wall on the west side is wider than that of the east, could suggest that the first floor was originally jettied on the west side and has since been under-built.

All of the trusses of the main three-bay roof structure survive. The north truss consists of its principals, a tie-beam, a king strut, and a collar; the strut has been taken out and the collar cut to allow the insertion of a doorway. The hidden southern truss was possibly of the same design. The two intermediate trusses have a pair of V-struts from the tie to the principals and no collar, but the evidence suggests that they were originally collared trusses of the same pattern as the north gable truss.

The trusses originally supported two tiers of trenched purlins with simple chamfers, and a ridge-piece; the lower purlins were presumably removed when the dormer gables were added. The dormer-trusses consist of a pair of queen struts to the collar forming the jambs of a primary window; above each collar is a pair of V-struts up to the principals. The west side was evidently considered to be grander; on this side there is a row of close-studding beneath the truss, and moulded bargeboards. There is some evidence to suggest that the

northern dormer gable on the west side could have been a doorway associated with a stair tower, a missing but necessary structure given the lack of any other known access to the attic floor.

Internally, the ground floor consists of a single large room with richly moulded ceiling beams. The bridging beams and spine beam are of the same depth and profile and there are pendants at their intersections. Together with smaller subsidiary moulded beams they create a pattern of plain, recessed plastered panels.

The main glory of the building is on the first floor. There is a single grand chamber with wainscoted walls and a particularly fine plastered ceiling. The wainscot hides the bay posts of the timber-framing, though one of these was seen when its panelling was partially removed – and had a bracket at its top, which was presumably the case with the other posts, accounting for the otherwise odd diagonal boxing in the plasterwork at the top of each bay post.

The basic structure of the attic floor can be seen in the pattern of the ceiling. This has a pair of boxed and plastered axial beams running between the girding beams in the gables and the two bridging beams of the intermediate frames. This creates nine panels in all, which are in turn sub-divided by plaster crosses centred on square bosses, all of the work being heavily decorated with a variety of floral and running patterns. The ceiling has clearly sagged in the middle and possible later plasterwork has been added underneath each side of the bridging beams.

Figure 3.57 The former Conservative Club. The first-floor chamber with its elaborate ceiling, fireplace, overmantle and panelling, being inspected by authors Hughes (left) and Morriss (right) in 2011

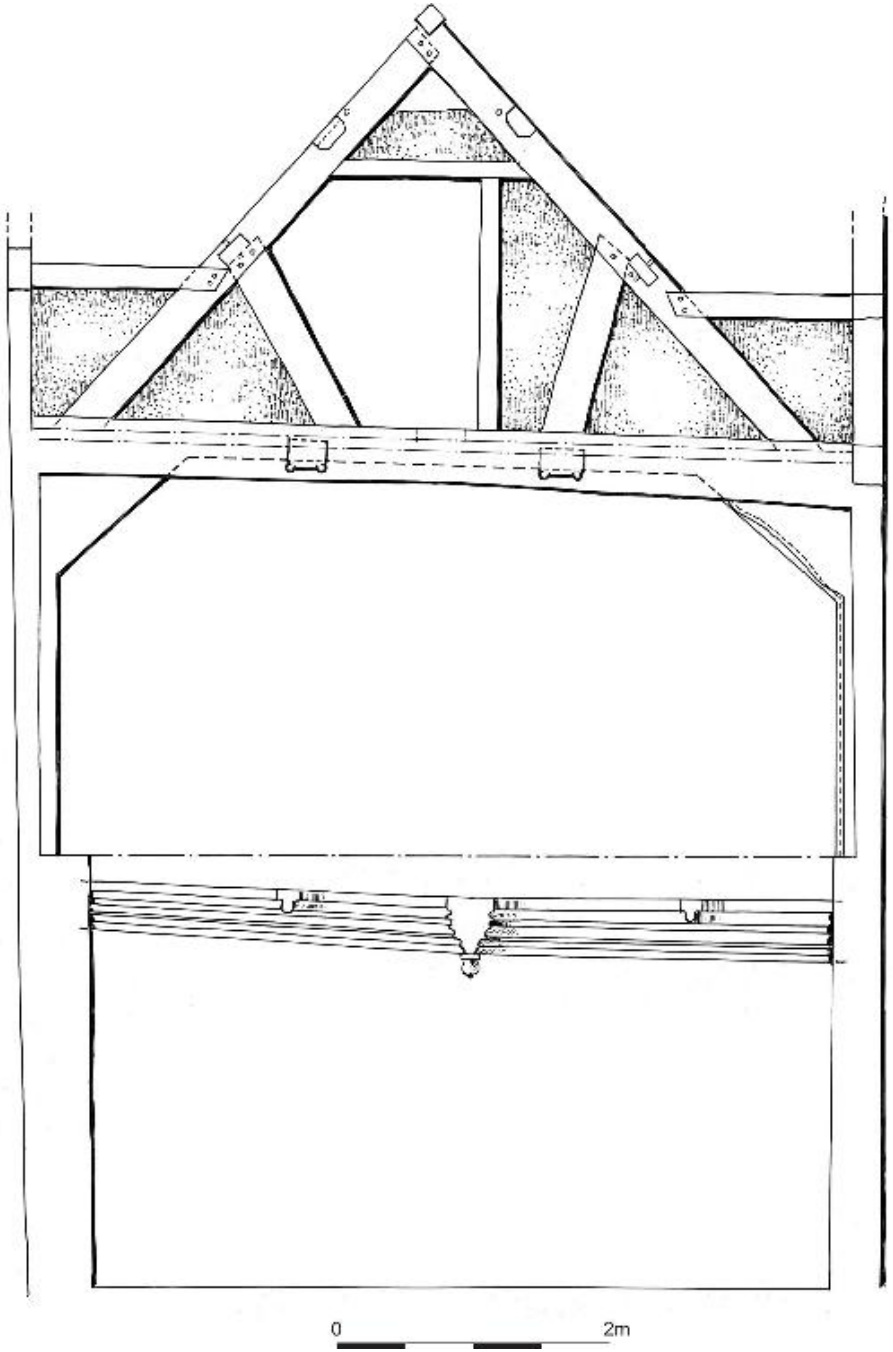


Figure 3.58 The cross-frame of the surviving rear wing of the Conservative Club building on East Street, including the lower cheeks of the dormer gables.

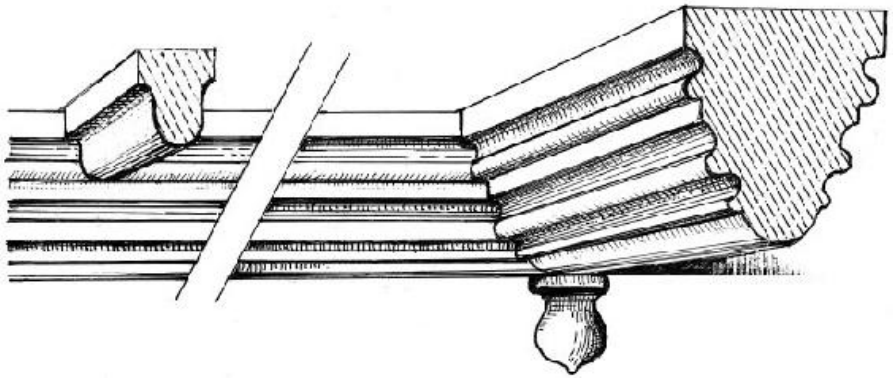


Figure 3.59 Detail of the ceiling beams in the lower room (the ceiled hall) of the former Conservative Club

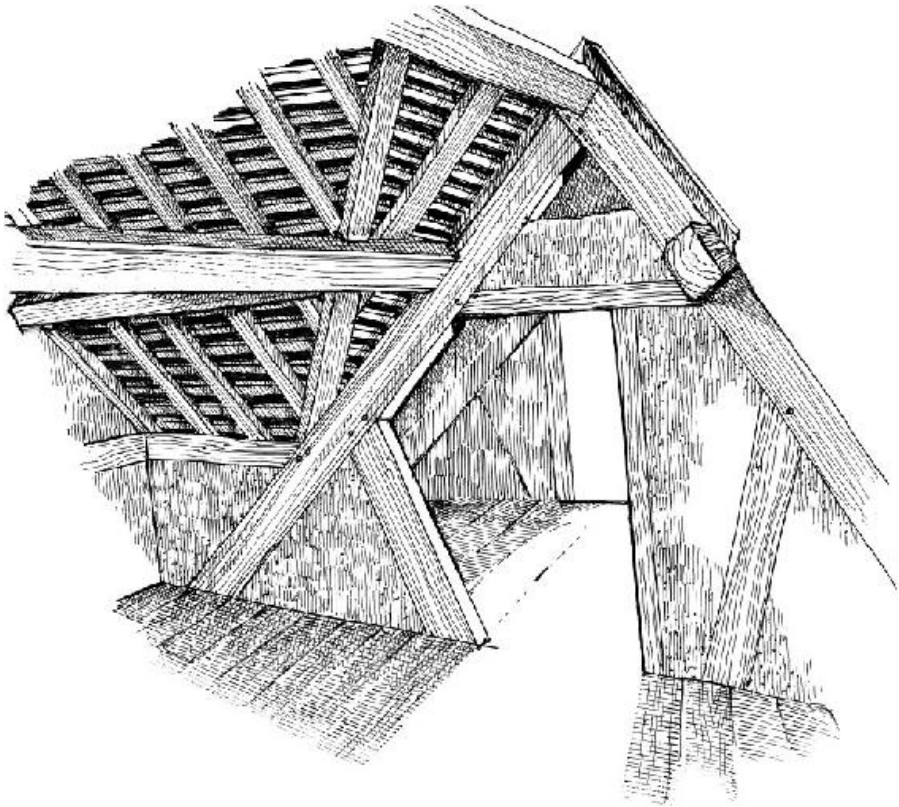


Figure 3.60 Artist's view of part of the attic over the rear wing of the former Conservative Club

The dormer gables are very similar in form and decoration to those of two early 17th-century buildings in the city: the Old House, dated to 1621, and the former Farmers' Club, built just a few years earlier.

The richly decorated first-floor plaster ceiling and the wainscot lining the room have been dated by the Royal Commission to the mid-17th century (RCHM 1931, 142). Although it is possible that the dormer gables were added a little later than those of the Old House and former Farmers' Club, it seems unlikely that the plaster ceiling, at least, would have been as early as them. Therefore, the dormers and ceiling are either of two separate phases, or of one mid-17th-century phase. Removal of an area of render from the west elevation in 2013 confirmed that the basic structure of the building is of two phases. The upper part of the framing (attic-floor level, including the dormer gables) was found to be an addition to the earlier frame, a new wall-plate for the upper storey having been pegged onto the top of the old wall-plate (Sherlock 2013).

Discussion

Although it is possible to determine the layout of this high-status rear wing in the later 17th century, by which time it had been fitted with its fine plastered ceilings, assessing its slightly earlier phase is much more difficult because of the ceilings. As is the case with the fine wall paintings in the Black Lion, the ceiling and panelling in this building have left no trace in the documents. The 18th-century divisions and sub-divisions of the house and the acquisition of land in the garden area are difficult to follow and make analysing the layout of the house confusing.

By the mid-17th century, this was clearly a very grand house with a magnificent first-floor great chamber above an equally grand ground-floor room. Above them were useable attics, divided into three separate rooms, one to each bay. The three levels were probably reached by way of a stair tower attached to the north end of the west wall. Understanding this surviving wing as it was in the mid-17th century is thus relatively straightforward: the difficulty lies in the analysis of the original phase, whose fabric is obscured by the later alterations. The visible elements of the primary phase of the building are the ceiling beams to the ground floor, and the intermediate bay posts. Apart from clearly predating the dormers their dating is difficult. The richly moulded first-floor axial and bridging beams suggest a mid-16th-century date and have some similarity with those in the floor structure of 18 High Town. The simple king-strut roof trusses have some similarities with the end trusses of Pool Farm, probably built in the first half of the 16th century, though the 2013 evidence is fairly conclusive to the effect that the attic roof framing belongs to a second phase of building. It seems that, in the first phase, there were single, grand, rooms on each floor level, as there were

later. The critical aspect that needs clarification is whether or not the first-floor room was then open to the roof. The added attic storey was clearly designed to be used, greatly extending the accommodation on offer in the rear wing; the boarding of the attic is very old and is nailed to joists that run west–east between the wall-plates and axial beams.

(20) 7 St Peter's Street (Figs 3.61–3.63; Plate 27)

Introduction and historical background

No. 7 St Peter's Street lies on the south side of the street, close to its junction with Offa Street. At least in the late 19th century it occupied only a tiny plot, at the eastern end of the High Town – St Peter's Street series, extending south roughly only twice the length of the building, and being hemmed-in on the east by a much larger plot on the corner of Offa Street. It has a three-storey, one-bay, rendered brick facade, probably of 18th-century date, and its antiquity is thus hidden from anyone viewing the building straight-on. However, since at least the late 1950s when the adjacent bank building was built to the east and set back slightly from the street, part of the flank of no. 7 has been exposed to view. Whilst this is clearly part of a jettied, timber-framed, three-storeyed building, it was nearly thirty years before the building was listed – and only then because of another English Heritage and City Council-funded publication, the *High Town Hereford* study of 1989 (Rock Townsend 1989).

Very little is known of the building's origins or early history, as there are no known useful documentary references to it. It is built, however, close to High Town and the medieval city's commercial heart. It is known that, in the late 19th century, the building was The Sun public house. In the rear yard is a small brick brewery built about 1903. The building is currently in use as a charity shop.

Description

The original jettied street front has been replaced by brickwork and the roof remodelled, perhaps at the same time. However, most of the framing appears to survive from sole-plate to wall-plate. The cellar may also be primary, or indeed earlier than the building above.

Behind the brick facade is a long, three-storey, timber-framed structure, built at right-angles to the street. As it is confined on both sides by other buildings and covered internally by later decorative finishes, most of the framing is hidden, though it seems to be of square panels. The most significant feature of the building is the fact

that, despite having a narrow street frontage, it originally had quite elaborate jetties at first- and second-floor level. There seem to have been two rows of panels at each level and the framing was stiffened on the east (side) elevation by the introduction of straight up-braces from the corner posts to the girding beams of the side frames. The jetties were supported by curving, moulded brackets rising from moulded corner posts.

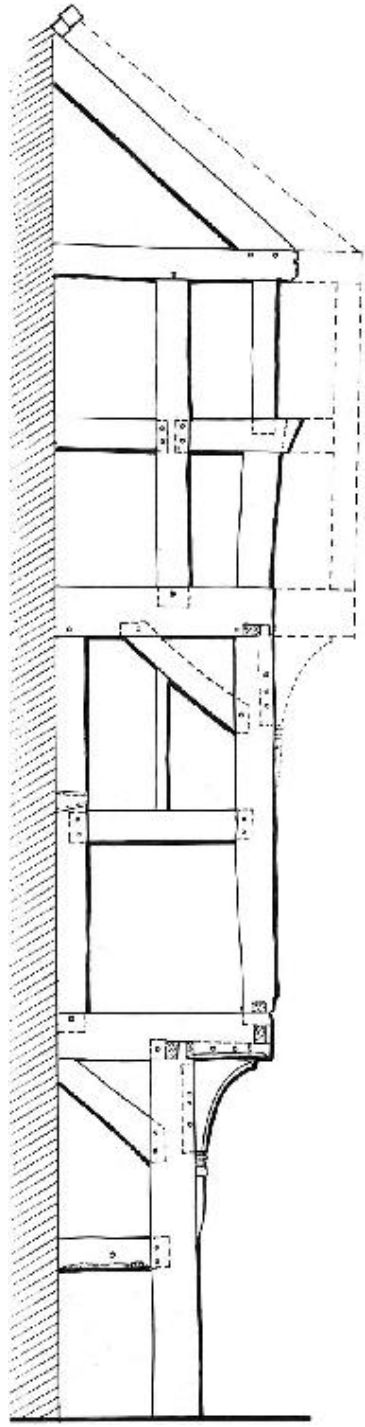


Figure 3.61 Survey drawing of the north-eastern corner of 7 St Peter's Street, with the presumed second-floor jetty added

Given the lack of windows in the side walls, there were probably

large windows – perhaps oriels – in the street front at each floor level, perhaps including the attic which seems to have had a jettied gable.

The front part of the roof was later rebuilt to fit the raised parapet of the 18th-century brickwork, and is now aligned parallel to the street. Most of the timbers and perhaps at least two trusses in the roof structure are re-used, presumably from the original roof. One is a fairly standard queen-strut truss with two struts and a collar. The other is an open attic truss, with just two raking struts from tie to principals.

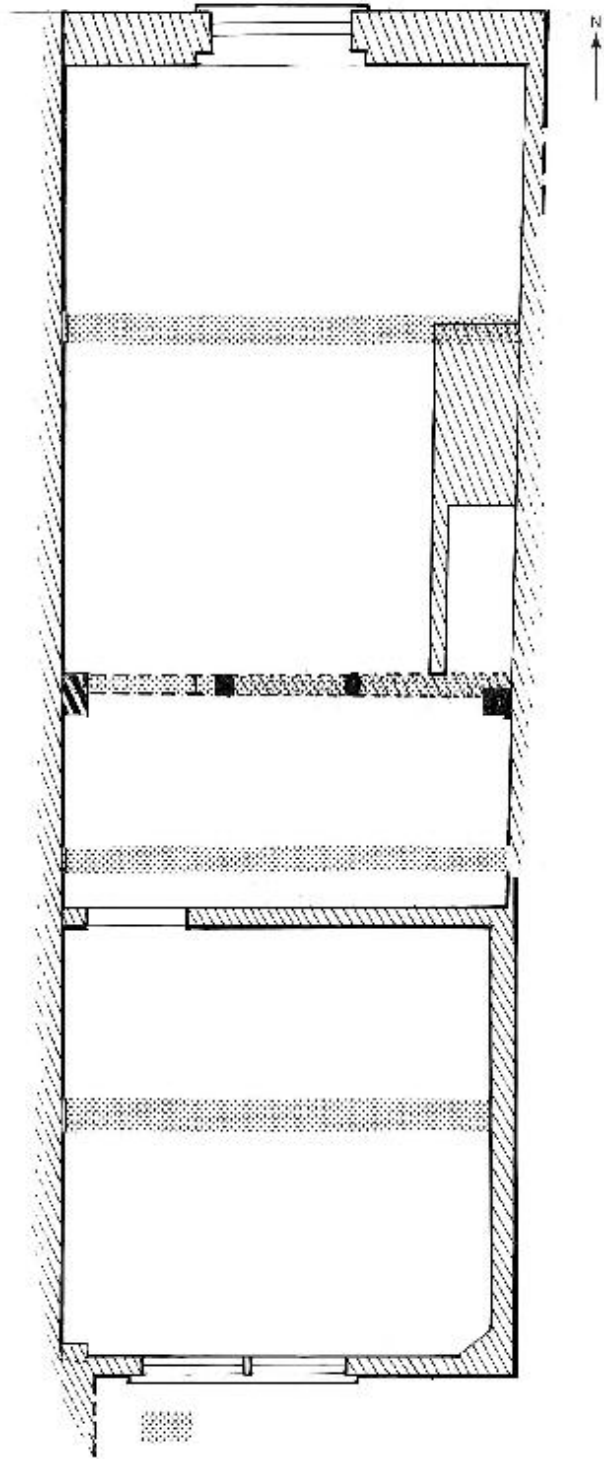


Figure 3.62 Ground-floor plan of 7 St Peter's Street, with the street to the top. A simple two-cell, in-line, narrow plan. Dotted lines relate to bridging beams

Discussion

No. 7 St Peter's Street occupies an extremely small plot, once, perhaps, part of a much longer, narrow burgage of the kind found all along the south side of High Town and St Peter's Street, stretching back to East Street at the rear. Despite being at the far eastern end of this important series of plots, it appears to have had a fairly grand, jettied front elevation, probably well-windowed both for architectural impact and practical issues of lighting the interior.

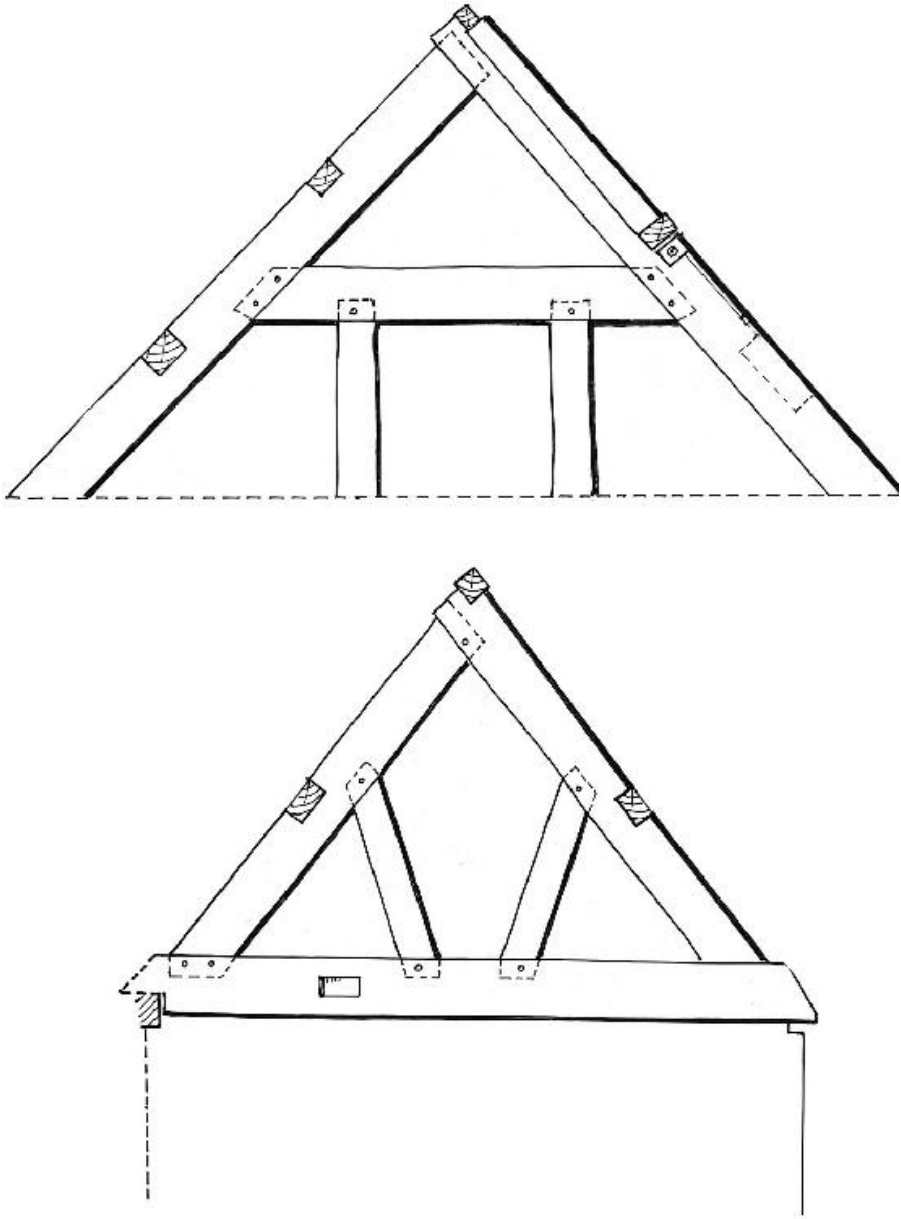


Figure 3.63 South gable (top) and intermediate roof trusses in 7 St Peter's Street

Whilst there is no useful early documentary evidence, the general stylistic evidence of the surviving framing suggests an early 17th-century date. The interior has been considerably altered but may have consisted of rooms front and back on either side of a lost central stack. The building, given its location, probably always accommodated commercial activities on the ground floor, with domestic rooms above. It is unclear when it became a public house, but that need not have

been the main reason for the 'upgrading' of the facade – perhaps in the late 18th or 19th century – in brick.

(21) 64–66 Widemarsh Street (Figs 3.64–3.68)

Introduction

Nos 64–66 Widemarsh Street stood on the east side of the street, a hundred metres or so outside the former Widemarsh Gate in the city's medieval defences, on the way towards the Essex Arms. The main interest in the building lies not in its architectural design but in the manner of its construction, and the significance that may have in relation to an important episode in the history of Hereford.

In the summer of 1993 this apparently non-descript building was demolished and the site redeveloped. Initially, there had been no plans to pull it down, but when it was being stripped-out, structural problems emerged and, notwithstanding attempts to try and get the building conserved, the Council finally agreed to demolition. The survey that ensued revealed that it was, in origin, a two-bay, two-storey, timber-framed building, but that the majority of the main timbers had been salvaged and re-used from other structures, though they showed little sign of weathering. The building is interpreted as a house built soon after the end of the Civil War using timbers stored and saved from houses pulled down during the war to deny cover to the besieging army in the suburb outside the Widemarsh Gate.

Historical background

According to one document it seems that, at the end of the 16th century, Widemarsh Street was 'unbuilded' between Coningsby's Hospital and the town ditch, at least on the east side.[70] By the 1630s, a number of houses had been built in the street, several belonging to Joyce Jefferies, the diarist, who was related to the Coningsby family. Buildings in that part of Widemarsh Street immediately outside the city gate were demolished for strategic reasons during the Civil War, prior to the siege commencing in 1645. The houses were on both sides of the road and, although the location of all of them is not yet known, the garden of one of them, 'Mistress Jeffries garden' abutted a plot, later to be All Saints' School, on the north. Her 'new house', which stood where the multi-storey car park now stands, appears to have been built of brick (Shoesmith 1995, 85). In 1645, her diary records how her properties outside the gate, including the new house she had just had built, were sold for the value of the materials, to save them from being burned. Other houses stood outside the gate in Widemarsh

Street in the first part of the 17th century and these must also have been destroyed, but it seems that the citizens of Hereford were in no hurry to replace them after hostilities ceased and it was the end of the century or later before the street was rebuilt.

It is this lack of definition in the 17th-century street that makes the property so difficult to trace. The phrase, 'two gardens without Widemarsh Gate', might be anywhere in half a mile of highway. Individual sites can only be located by the fortuitous survival of deeds or by a detailed historical survey of the whole street, which was not appropriate in this study. No identifiable documentary evidence earlier than the 20th century has been located for 64 and 66 and, therefore, nothing further can be said about the documentary history of this building.

Description

Behind the brick facade was a two-bay, two-storey, timber-framed building with attics, aligned parallel to the street. The majority of main timbers in the surviving framing were re-used from an earlier timber-framed building or buildings. These appeared to have been not dissimilar in scantling to the primary timbers of the frames in which they had been re-used, and none was more badly weathered. The carpentry with which these new and re-used members were put together was fairly poor; the surviving panel infills were of wattle laid onto split laths rather than twigs.

Of the two side-frames, the front (west) had been replaced in brick and the rear was mutilated and in parts inaccessible. The principal survivals were the south gable-frame and the intermediate cross-frame. The gable frame, badly weathered on its outer face, was of simple square panelling, apparently with two rows of four panels per storey. The ground-floor section had been altered, and because of the degree of original re-used material it was difficult to assess its original design, there being a surfeit of empty mortices and redundant peg and stave holes in its timbers. Its surviving south-eastern corner post had a gun-stock jowl. The frame was topped by a straight-forward truss almost entirely constructed of salvaged materials. Three queen struts rose from tie to collar, and above the collar a pair of curving V-struts rose to the principals.

The intermediate cross-frame had been under-built in breeze-block and its panelling removed. The first floor appears to have originally consisted of a similar design to that in the south gable-frame. Two of its storey-high posts were clearly re-used and had redundant grooves cut into their sides, presumably intended for cross-laths and indicating

that they were once part of a close-studded frame.

There seemed to be a primary doorway at the west end that had subsequently been blocked – presumably when the property had been divided into two dwellings. The truss was ephemeral, consisting of a very waney-edged truss and timbers making a central door-frame within a pair of principals. Although shoddily built, it seemed to be primary. This frame had been erected before the large brick stack was inserted into the eastern part of the building.

Figure 3.64 Nos 64–66 Widemarsh Street during demolition in 1993, looking south

The first and attic floors were supported by axial beams with crude chamfers and stops taking the inward ends of the common joists. These had simple, splayed-shouldered, un-pegged soffit tenons, most of which had slipped and been repaired. The first-floor joists were tenoned into the girding beams but the attic joists were simply lodged on top of the wall-plates. Short lengths of wood were nailed on top of the wall-plate in between them, presumably to try and keep the building weather-tight. Both upper floor levels had been re-boarded, but the new boards had been laid directly on top of earlier, and possibly primary, broad deals.

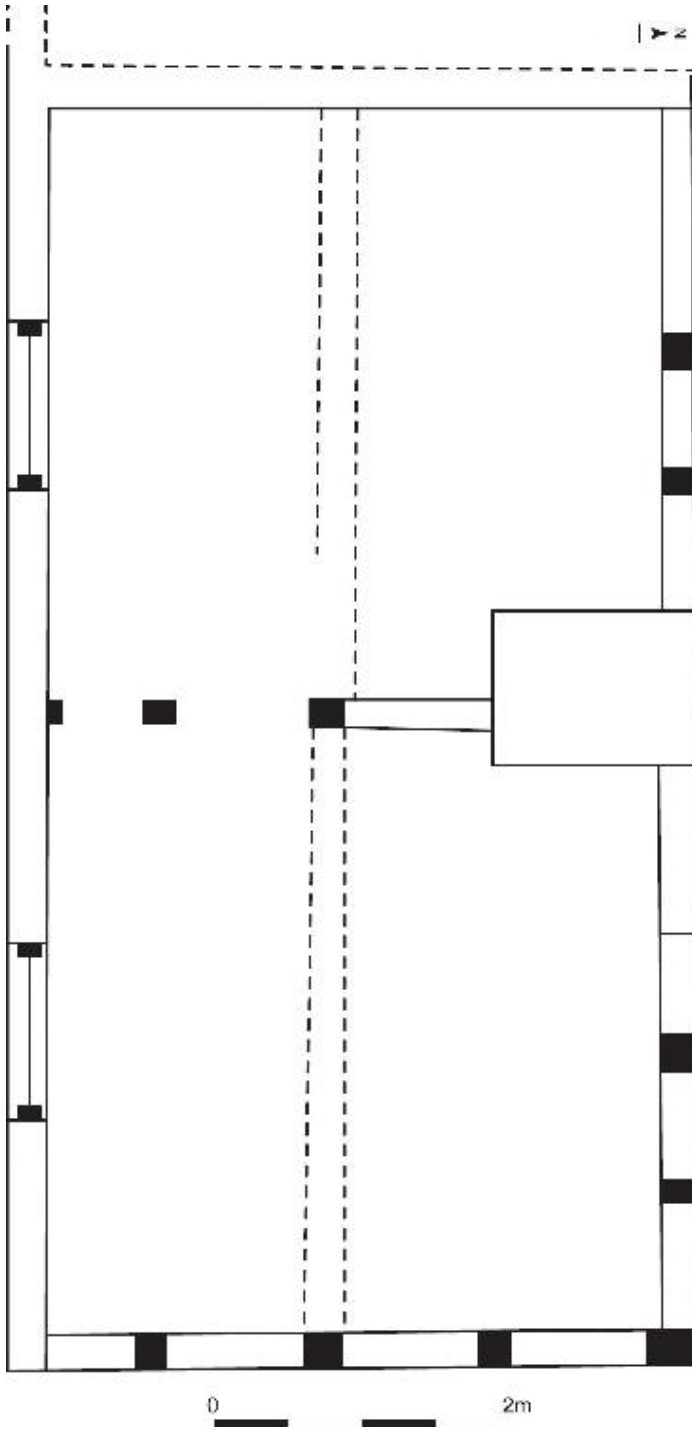


Figure 3.65 Basic sketch ground plan of 64–66 Widemarsh Street; Widemarsh Street is on the left

The original roof had two tiers of trenched purlins and a ridge-

piece. Only the ridge-piece survived, the original purlins and common rafters having been removed when the attic storey was raised to a full storey. This was associated with the raising of the brick wall to the street and the creation of a cat-slide roof on the rear slope to cover a tall lean-to addition.

The stairs in the south-east corner of the building were secondary to the frame, there being redundant mortices in the spine beam to take the ends of the joists removed when the stairs were inserted; the large brick stack to the east was also inserted. The position of the original stairs or stack could not be found. It was also impossible to identify the original window or door positions in the outside walls. The remaining evidence, including the primary first- and attic-floor doorways through the partition frame, suggested that the building had originally been a single dwelling that was later divided into two.

The first and attic floors were certainly divided into two bay-width rooms, but it is just possible that the two bays of the ground floor formed a single larger chamber before the stack was added. In one of the fireplaces was a rather fine early l9th-century grate that seemed to be contemporary with it – and could thus date the stack itself. That may have been the date that the front frame was replaced with brick. The two-and-a half-storey brick facade, of hand-made bricks laid in a two-leaf (i.e. one stretcher brick thick) Flemish bond looked to be of early 19th-century date and thus almost certainly contemporary with the stack.

Discussion

The date of this building, given its rather poor carpentry and very simple design, could be almost anywhere in the 17th century. A date in the middle of the century would be perhaps a little more specific but is difficult to prove on stylistic and archaeological grounds alone. The significant feature of the building is its wholesale re-use of older timbers from other timber-framed buildings. Whilst occasional re-use has been noted elsewhere in the city, this is the only known example where it occurs to such a degree.

Given its geographical position there may be a historical reason for this. Widemarsh Street was, until the conversion of Edgar Street into part of the inner ring road in the 1960s, the start of the main route from Hereford to the north. By the end of the 12th century, ribbon development along it had led to the creation of an extra-mural suburb. In the Civil War it is known that many of the buildings outside Widemarsh Gate were deliberately pulled-down to improve lines of fire for the defenders and to prevent surprise attack. It is thus possible that 64–66 Widemarsh Street was on the site of buildings demolished

as part of this programme, being quite close to the city gate. Since it is known that some owners were able to salvage and re-use the timbers of the dismantled buildings, there may well have been readily available building materials after the war for the reconstruction of buildings in the street. Nos 64–66 Widemarsh Street may therefore have been built after the war, and this could account for the large number of re-used timbers. This can, of course, only be speculation.

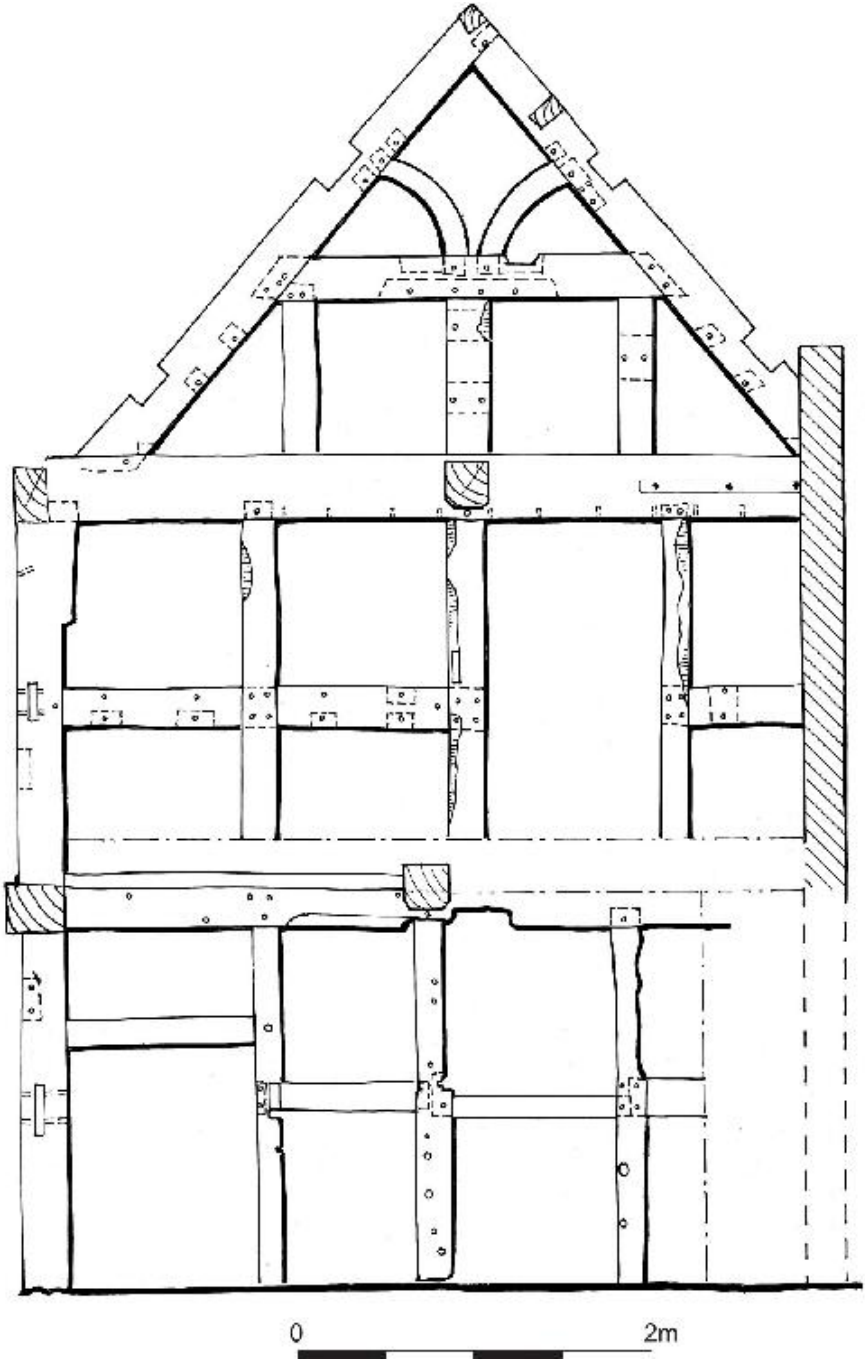


Figure 3.66 Detailed survey of the inner face of the southern end frame of 64–66 Widemarsh Street showing the extent of re-used timbers used in its construction

However, it is worth mentioning that another building was demolished in the same summer as nos 64–66. This was 88–90 Widemarsh Street, a little further to the north and on the same side of

the street. Although much altered and possibly two separate buildings, it too had timber-framed elements made up of re-used materials; it was not possible to examine these in any detail. It may be that it too was rebuilt after the Civil War. Further out still, beyond Coningsby's Hospital, the Oxford Arms, on the opposite side of the street, appears to be of mid-16th-century date and seems not to have been affected by the Civil War. The nearby Essex Arms (Building 16), of mid-17th-century date, showed no sign of having made use of re-used materials. This limited evidence seems to indicate that only the suburban buildings close to the city defences were pulled down and that those further away were left standing. At present, the apparently careful dismantling of such buildings suggests a sensible strategy by the authorities. It contrasts with the often-hurried burning of suburban areas by defenders – presumably carried out when the threat of attack was imminent – that occurred in some other towns, such as, for example, Ludlow.

Despite its undoubted poor structural and architectural qualities, 64–66 Widemarsh Street nevertheless seems to have been the last surviving physical reminder of one aspect of the city's response to the impending hostilities of the Civil War, and it is thus disappointing that it could not have been preserved.

(22) 10–11 High Town (Figs 3.69–3.75; Plate 28)

Introduction

Nos 10–11 High Town stands on the north side of High Town, next to the Butter Market, and is a three-storey, two-bay, stuccoed building, probably of early 19th-century date, with shops on the frontage (a phone shop, Monsoon, and Accessorize). In the spring of 1996, repair work revealed that the rear range was a timber-framed building of considerable historic interest. It was, fairly certainly, built in the first half of the 17th century as a warehouse for Richard Andrews, a clothworker and farmer – someone with a need to store baled cloth, fleeces and perhaps cereals. It was of three storeys and equipped with full-height, bay-width doorways overlooking a yard. The range was later strengthened with new diagonal bracing, and later again sub-divided, glazed and heated when it was converted to residential use.

For much of their life, the buildings described here would have been, quite literally, overshadowed by the Old Market Hall, the arcaded three-storey timber-framed market hall that stood out in front, in High Town, from the beginning of the 17th century to the middle of the 19th (Fig 4.4). Nos 10 and 11 are narrow properties that

are now without their own separate back-yards or plot tails, these having been cleared to form an open space at the rear for goods deliveries to both the Butter Market to the west and the shops of the 1980s Maylord Orchard shopping-centre to the north and east. The plots formerly ran back from High Town to Maylord Street at the rear. Their original narrowness, like that of the plots on the south side of High Town, was an expression of continuing competition for these prime trading frontages.

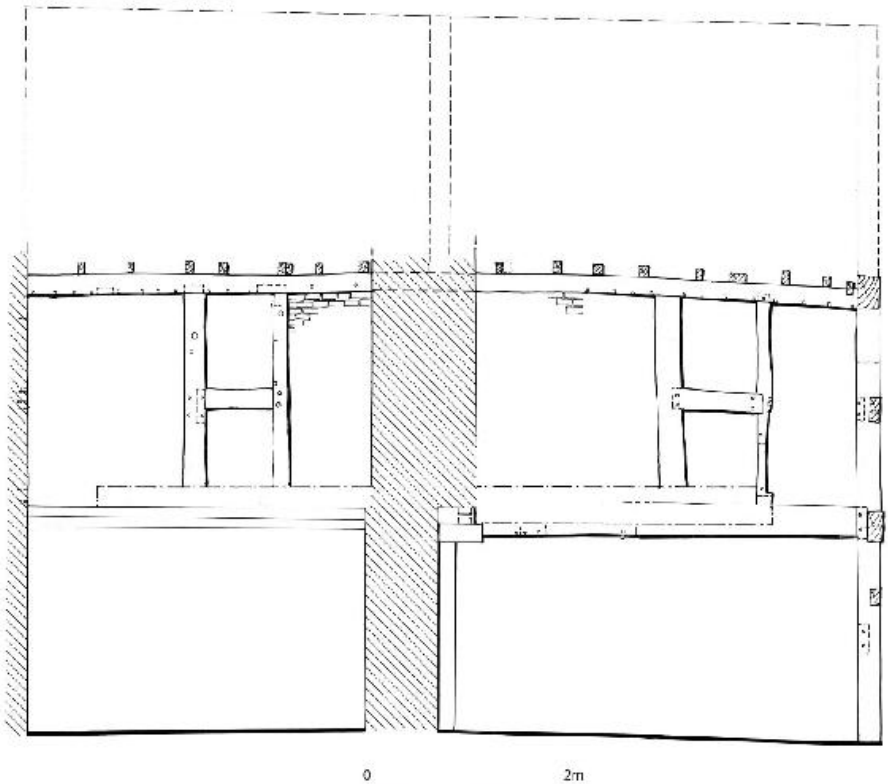


Figure 3.67 Survey of the inner face of the surviving timber-framing of the street side of 64–66 Widemarsh Street

Historical background

No. 11 High Town appears to have been in the same ownership as nos 10 and 9 (the present Butter Market) from at least the second half of the 17th century. In 1734, a lease made by Ann Berrington of Winsley records the mortgage of the Redstreak Tree and Dolphin Inn near the Market Hall (in High Town), on the site of the present Butter Market, to Timothy Geers.[71]At that time the property included two adjacent houses and later evidence implies that these were 10 and 11; these were in common ownership until the 19th century although the

frontages were let to tenants.[72] Ann had inherited the property from her father, Rowland Andrews, who had had it from his father, Richard.[73] It seems likely that Richard lived at 9 and let the two adjacent properties. However, it is also fairly clear that, behind the narrow frontage of 9, the premises widened out into a large yard, part of which still belonged to 10 at the beginning of the 20th century.[74]

In 1740, the Redstreak Inn was described as: 'A freehold new built house situated at the Guildhall. With large courts, a large summer house, a large garden well planted with fruit trees, large stables and coach house and all convenience fit for a gentleman, now used as a Tavern in the occupation of Thomas Ford' (Shoesmith and Eisel 2004, 21). Richard Andrews was a 'clothworker' and his probate inventory,[75] records that he had a 'presse for clothworkes'[76] in his court, and four pairs of shears, cutting boards and beams, scales and weights in his shop. He also had a farm, probably at Aylestone, with cereal crops, ten pigs, several horses and farm implements, and 80 sheep and 25 lambs on his land. With the need for storage of baled cloth and fleeces, and his extensive back premises apparently reaching the rear of no. 11, it seems likely that he built the warehouse at the back of no. 11, with its west-facing loading doors facing into his court and yard at no. 10.

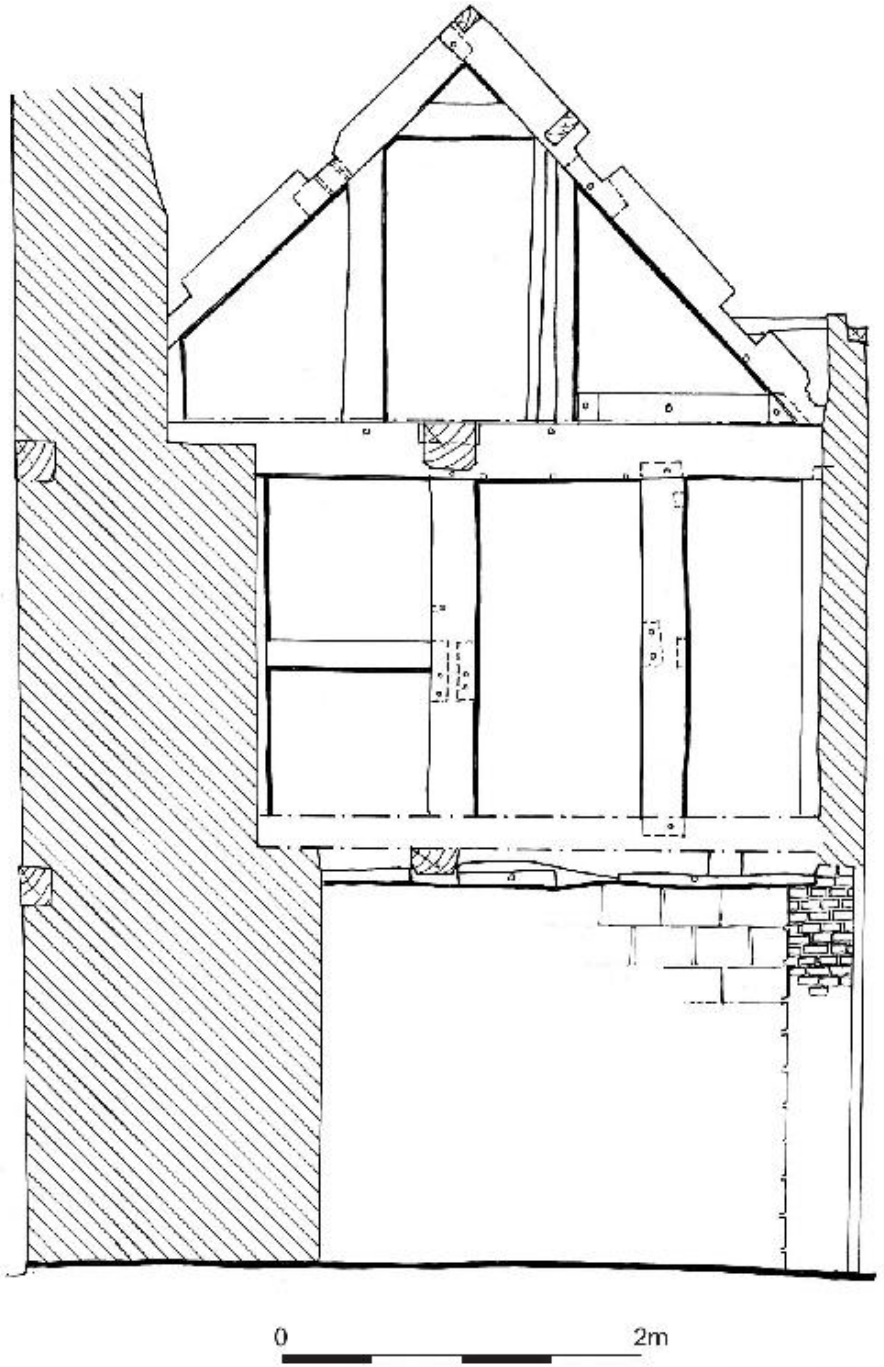


Figure 3.68 The north face of the internal cross-frame of 64–66 Widemarsh Street

Description

The rear range is a long and formerly free-standing timber-framed building; the gap between it and an earlier frontage block was

partially infilled by a timber-framed stair block, and, probably when the present front range was built, the resultant well in-between was floored, roofed over, and incorporated into the complex.

The rear wing is of three bays and three storeys. It originally had a plain gabled roof but this was removed in relatively recent times and replaced by a flat one. There is no evidence in the wall-plates to indicate the former existence of primary dormer-gables in the roof. Only a small portion of the south gable-truss survives: it appears to have consisted of two struts rising from tie to collar. The only unusual aspect of the design is the manner in which the foot of the principal is set in from the end of the tie.

The building is of square panelling with most of the panels now infilled with brick nogging. There are traces of the low stone plinth on which the framing stood, and sections of sole-plate. Incorporated into this framing are several diagonals as well as mullioned and cross-mullioned windows, several of which are blocked. From the structural evidence it is clear that the diagonals, which interrupt the original frame design, and the windows, are all later additions. Matching empty mortices in the posts indicate the positions of original rails that were removed to make room for the diagonals. The latter have stave holes in their soffits, indicating that, when they were inserted, the panel infills were still of wattle-and-daub. They thus pre-date the later brick nogging in the framing that replaced the wattle-and-daub in a subsequent phase.

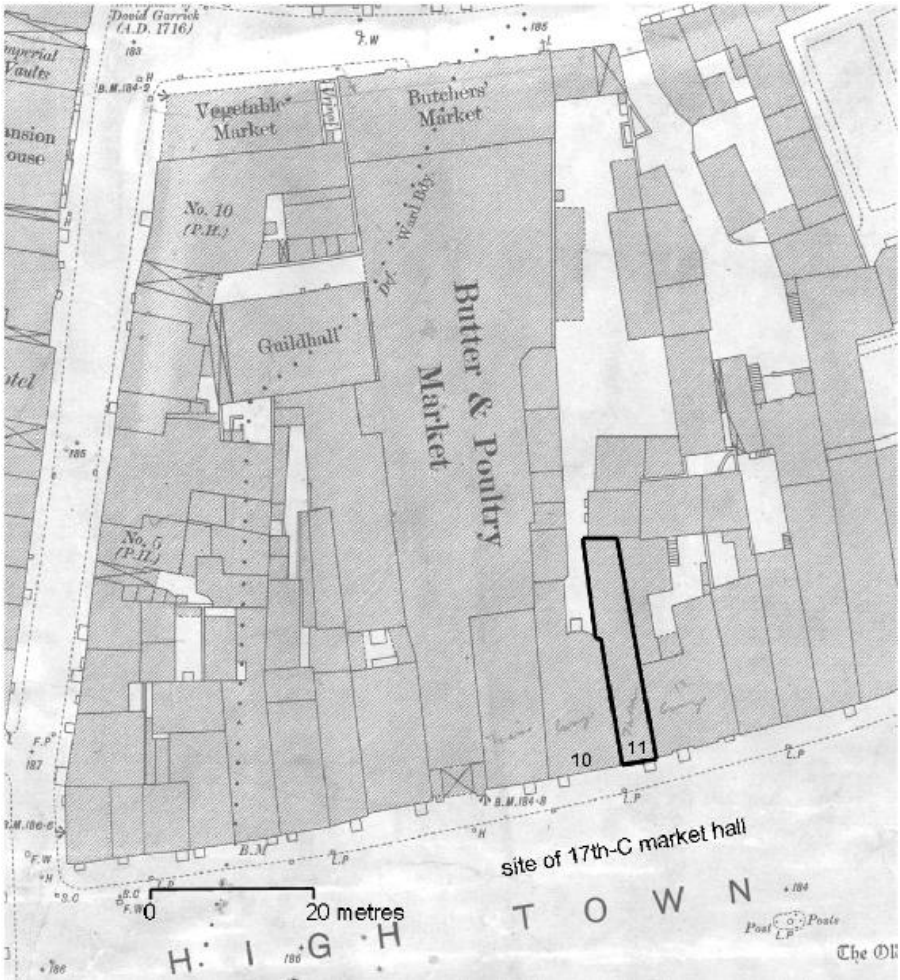


Figure 3.69 Location plan for 10–11 High Town (building 22), based on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1886

There are no primary openings in the north gable. In the west wall at ground-floor level there are two three-light and one two-light cross-mullioned windows. They have broad beaded-edge mouldings and an external rebate, though the present casements are later than the frames. There is another blocked window in the east wall, which is now abutted by a modern extension to the adjacent property. These windows are of the same design as others in different parts of the building – though some of these do not have the transoms. The original glazing of one half of such a window survived intact at the start of the renovation, but has since been taken out.

The window in the west wall of the second floor was of two lights but was not tall enough to have had a transom. The glazing consisted of rectangular leaded cames, taller than they were broad, in eight

rows of five. This assembly fitted into the shallow external rebate around the frame and was fixed to seven iron cross-stanchions by pliable lead laces. Each hand-wrought stanchion had a pointed end that was hammered into the central mullion. The other end consisted of a flattened loop that was bent inwards against the jamb and nailed in place. The glazing was thus fixed and non-opening.

The first-floor structure is supported by a pair of axial beams running between the bay girding-beams. These have ovolo chamfers in the two southern bays, but in the northern bay are plain chamfered. At the junction between the centre and northern bay the girding-beam is ovolo-moulded on the south side and plain chamfered on the other. The floor joists run west–east and have plain soffit tenon junctions with the spine beams. The bay posts have chamfers ending in rather fine basal lamb's-tongue stops.

All of the partitions had been taken out by the time the survey started. There was evidence that the first floor had been divided into at least two rooms, possibly with a corridor along the west side. One room had had a fireplace, the footings of its hearth being exposed during the building work. There was disturbance in the flooring above its position on each level to indicate the existence of a chimney-stack, long-since removed, to serve it. All these features were insertions, and in the primary phase there appear to have been no internal partitions at all.

At first-floor level the bay posts are again chamfered and have lamb's-tongue stops, and there are inserted windows in the west wall. As well as the lack of primary partitions within the building at any floor level, there appear to have been no openings in the original design other than three very wide, storey-high and full-bay width doorways in the west flank of the central bay. All the framing within these openings is inserted and seems contemporary with the mullioned windows.

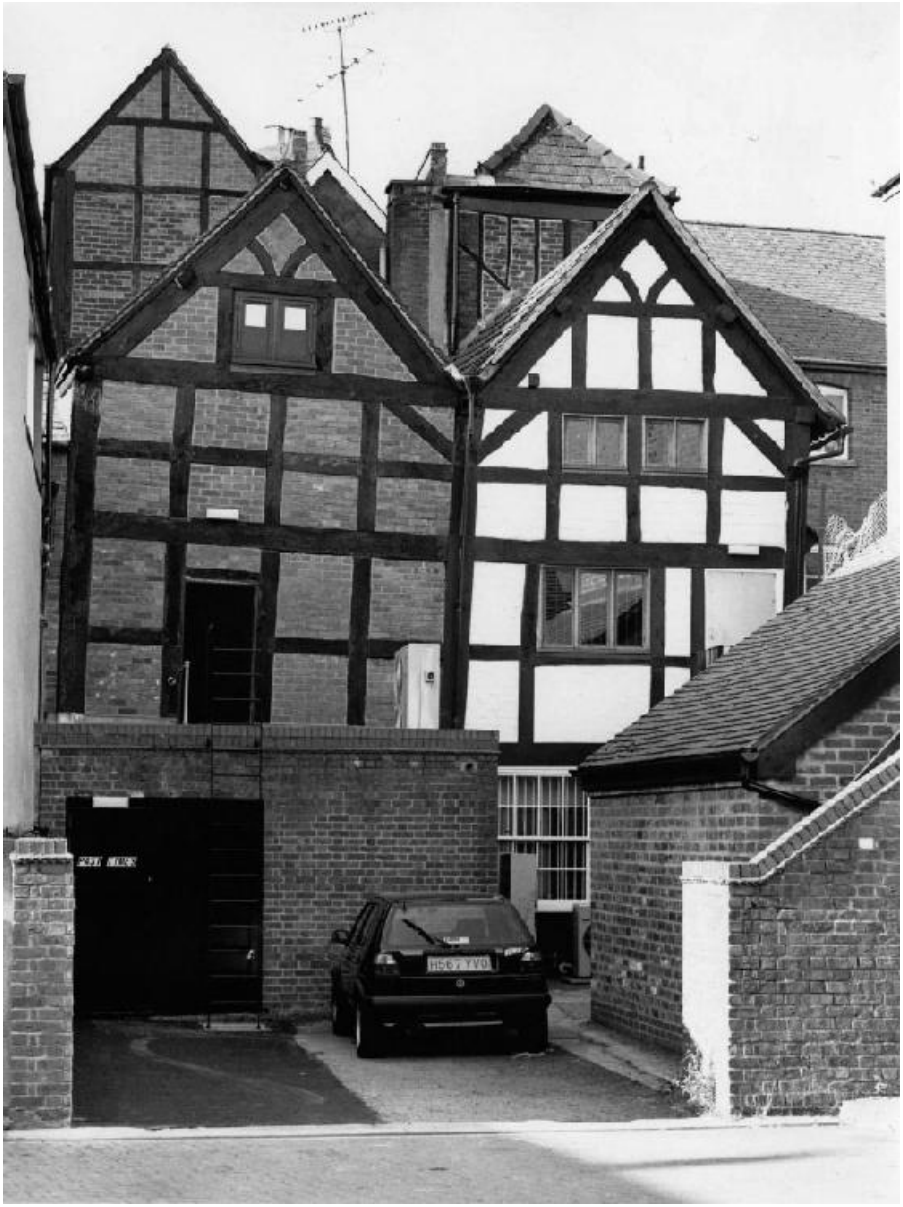


Figure 3.70 Rear view of the gable ends of 11 High Town (right) and 12 High Town (left), an almost identical structure. Above can be seen precarious-looking additions to the top storeys of the frontage buildings, with thin framing of late date

It appears that this rear building was constructed as a three-storey warehouse, the second floor probably being open to the roof. On each level the only opening was the large, full-height, bay-width doorway in the west wall, suitable for the off-loading of bulky goods from carts drawn-up alongside. There was probably a hoist in the roof structure to assist. It is unclear what was being stored within the building, but

the size of the openings and apparent lack of any others could indicate a bulky material such as wool. The few decorative features indicate a date in the 17th century.

At some time later, there appear to have been structural problems in the framing, leading to a partial reconstruction that included the introduction of diagonal braces. The new panels thus created were still infilled with wattle-and-daub and accurate dating of this work is difficult, but it probably occurred sometime in the mid- to late 17th century. It seems likely that the building was still being used commercially.

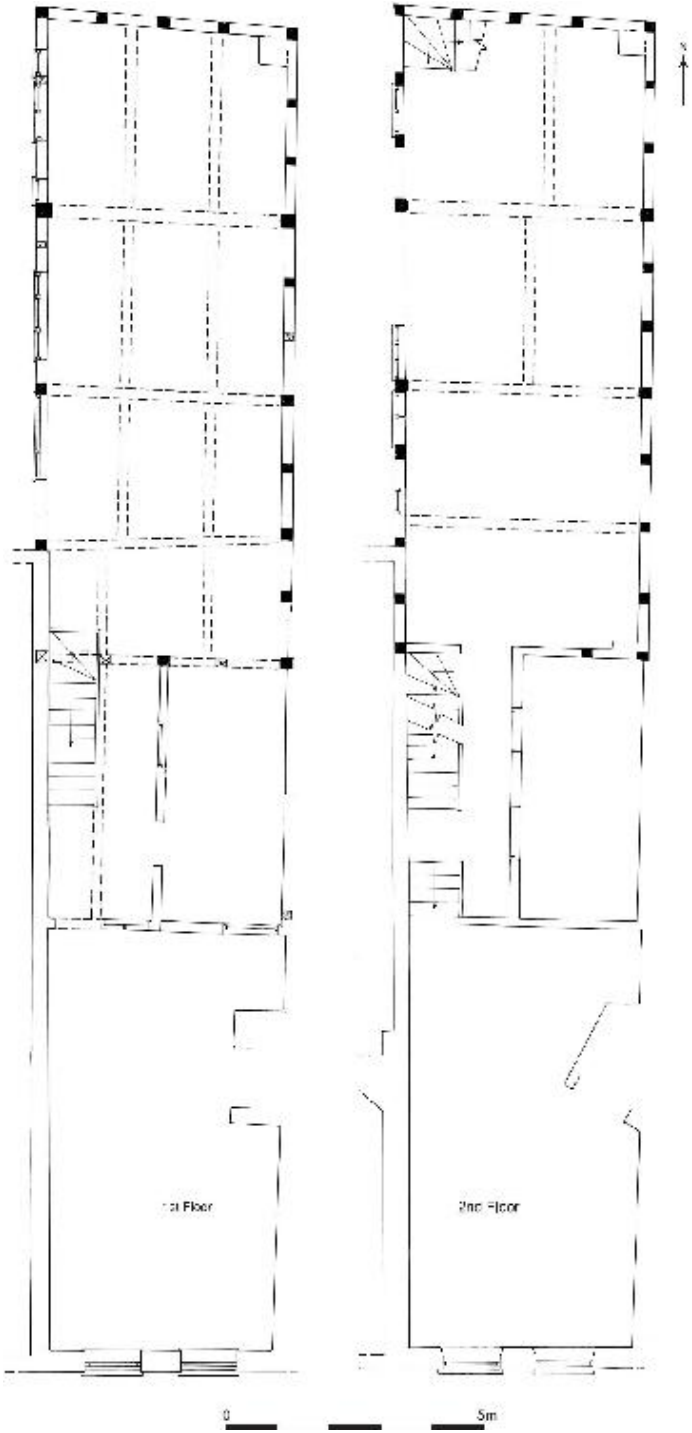


Figure 3.71 First- and second-floor plans of 10–11 High Town, with the timber-framed rear wing to the top

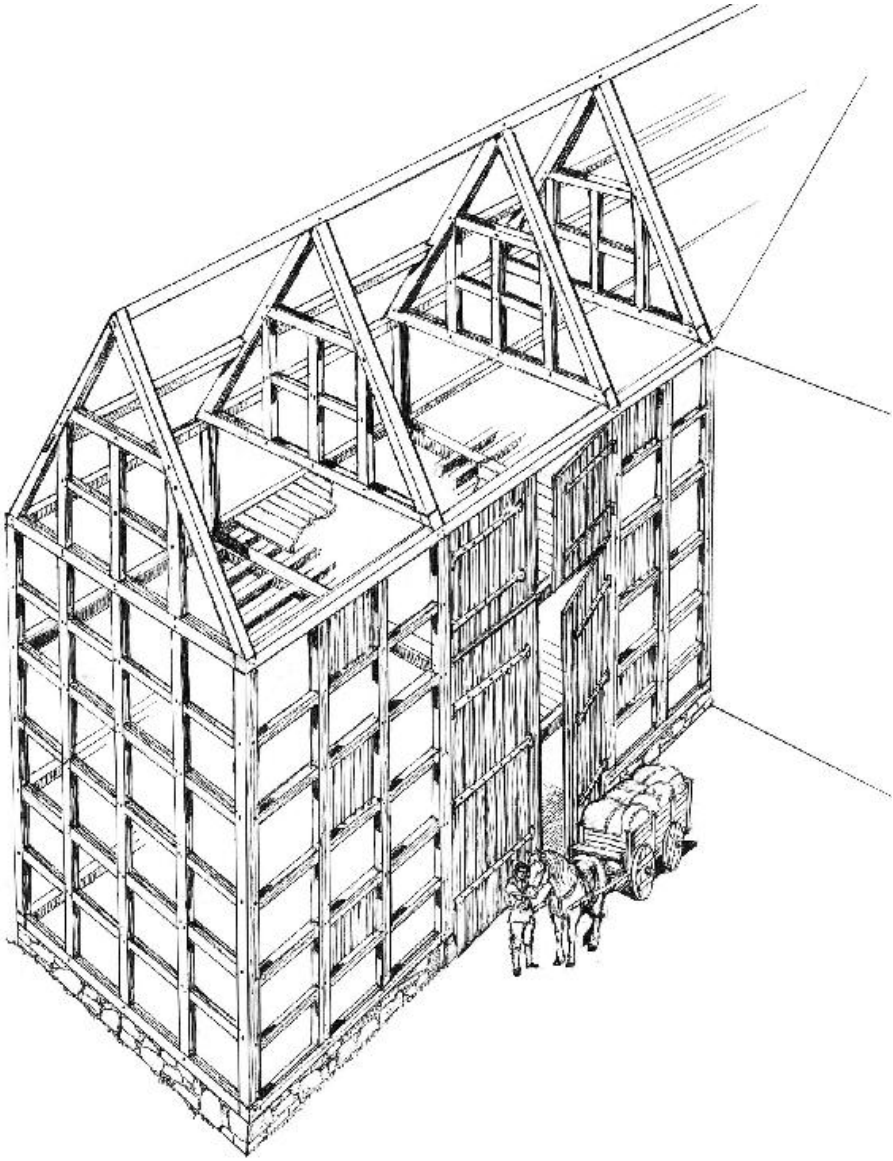


Figure 3.72 Reconstruction by Bryan Byron of the original phase of the warehouse building to the rear of 10–11 High Town, from the north-west

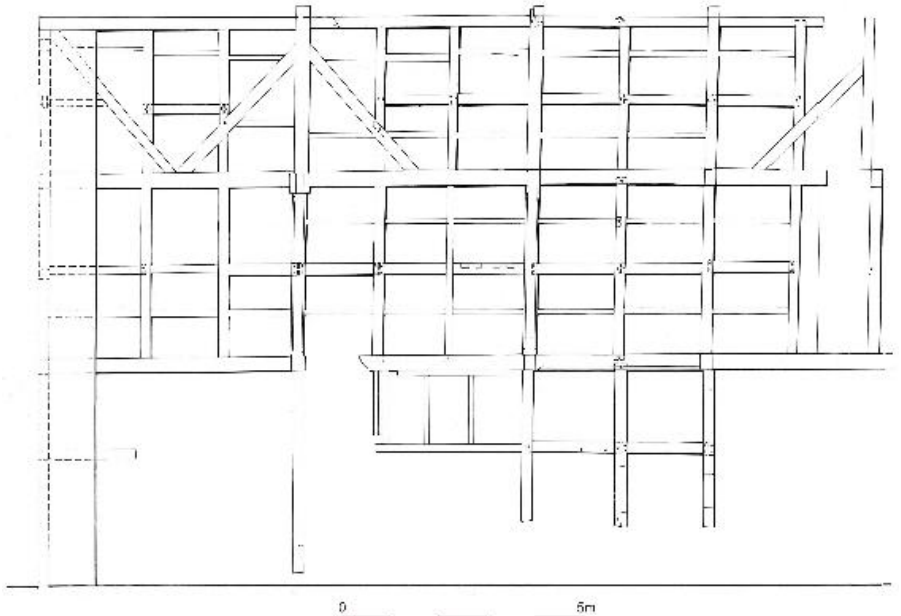


Figure 3.73 The internal face of the western side-frame of the rear building of 10–11 High Town; the braces are secondary but were added quite early on, before the frame infills were replaced with brick nogging. Original window and doorway openings have all been blocked in the past

Then came a major change, during which the original openings were infilled, glazed, mullioned windows were added, and brick nogging replaced most of the earlier wattle-and- daub infills. The open floors were sub-divided into smaller rooms and at least one chimney-stack was introduced into the building. It seems that the roof-space was floored to create a useable attic, reached by a small dog-leg stair with shadow-balusters at the north-west corner of the second floor; this probably led to the introduction of dormers within the altered roof slopes to light these attics. This work appears to have been associated with the creation of a fairly poor timber-framed staircase block occupying the western half of the former space between warehouse and frontage building. This contains a rather fine, if narrow, early 18th-century stair, which may well date the conversion of the warehouse into part of a dwelling. The stair and its accompanying passageway linked the two parts of what had become a fairly large house. Later still it is possible that this may have been sub-divided into smaller cottages, but most of the evidence for this has since been removed.

Discussion

The rear range of 11 High Town is a good and unusually straight-

forward example of a 17th-century commercial timber-framed building, and it is the only relatively intact former warehouse of its period to have been studied, to date, in the city north of the river. The original layout and basic construction are simple to assess and it was possibly designed as a wool store for the clothworker Richard Andrews (Fig. 3.72). The building clearly suffered from structural problems, leading to a fairly radical repair strategy later in the 17th century. It was subsequently converted to domestic use, probably by the mid-18th century.

There are probably other examples of such conversion in the city but, before the modern era, when the adaptive re-use of old commercial premises has become common, structural evidence for this is elusive. The Grapes offers a partial parallel, in that workshop functions (a pewterer's) within a larger dwelling were eventually eclipsed by domestic functions. A closer parallel can be found, however, in Shrewsbury, where Rowley's House, built at the end of the 16th century as part of a brewery, was gradually adapted to low-status residential use and multiple occupation.

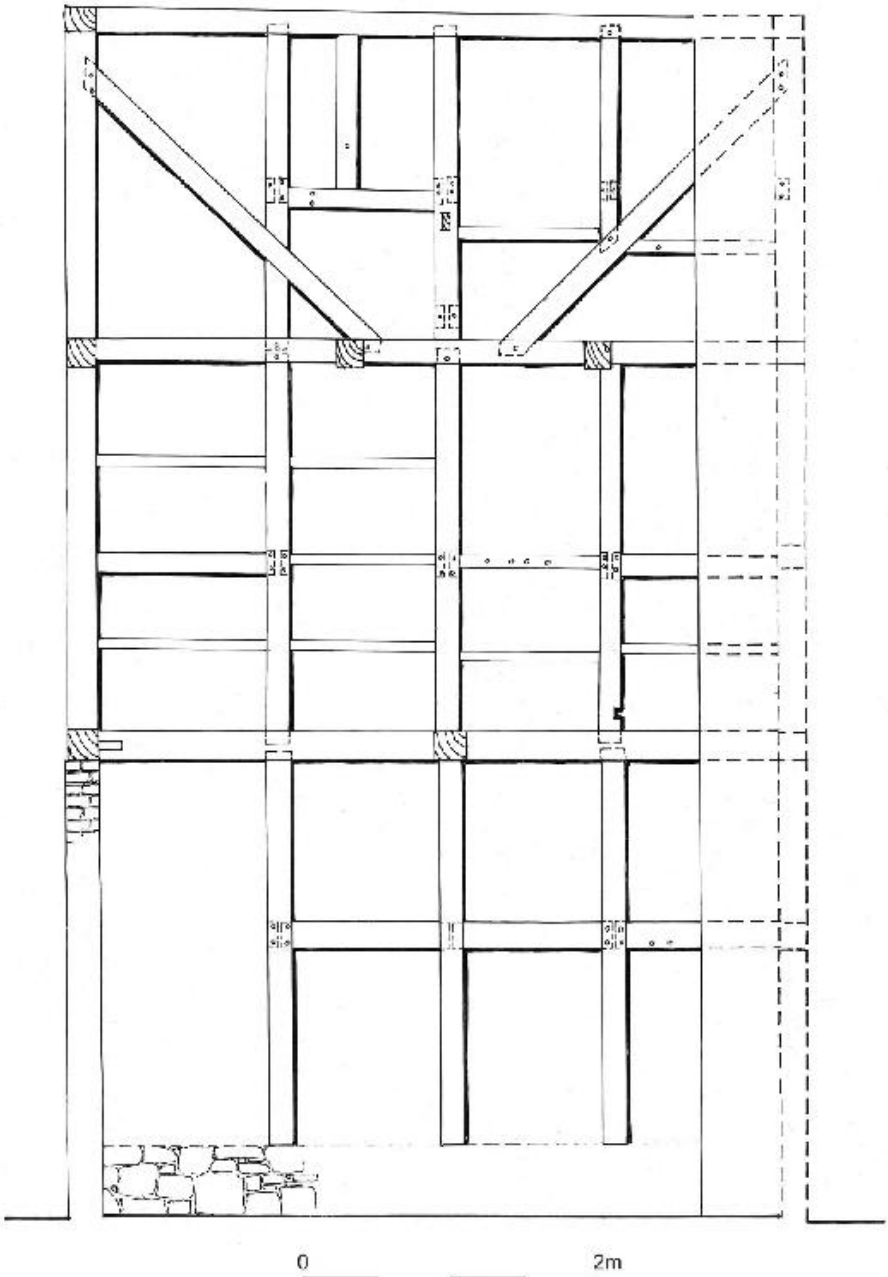


Figure 3.74 The internal face of the north gable-frame of the rear building of 10–11 High Town

(23) 18 High Town (Figs 3.1, 3.76–3.78)

Introduction

This building was the subject of a paper read by Alfred Watkins to the

Woolhope Club in 1934, in which he lamented the recent 'final and complete demolition of the ancient Freemen's prison' (Watkins 1934b). He was wrong on two counts. First, the building claimed destroyed was almost certainly not the Freemen's Prison (see Shoesmith and Crosskey 1994); second, while much of the building was indeed demolished, two bays out of the original five survived. This fragment also escaped a much more recent calamity in the form of a fire in 2010 which badly damaged the street frontage buildings of 16–18 High Town and 17 St Peter's Street (all remain un-rebuilt in 2017); the fire also just missed the 15th-century Booth Hall, lying alongside the timber-framed building of no. 18 on its east side.

The historic section of no. 18 is set to the rear of, and at right-angles to, Alban House, a mid-19th-century structure with a late neo-classical front on the south side of High Town, badly damaged in the fire. What remains at the rear is part of the rear wing to a mid- or late 16th-century timber-framed house, probably built for the wealthy, office-holding, Bromwich family. The surviving fragment is of two storeys with attics and is distinguished by the unusual and elaborate 'close-studded' construction of its floor frames. The ground-floor room appears to have been a single large chamber with a heavily moulded coffered ceiling over it.

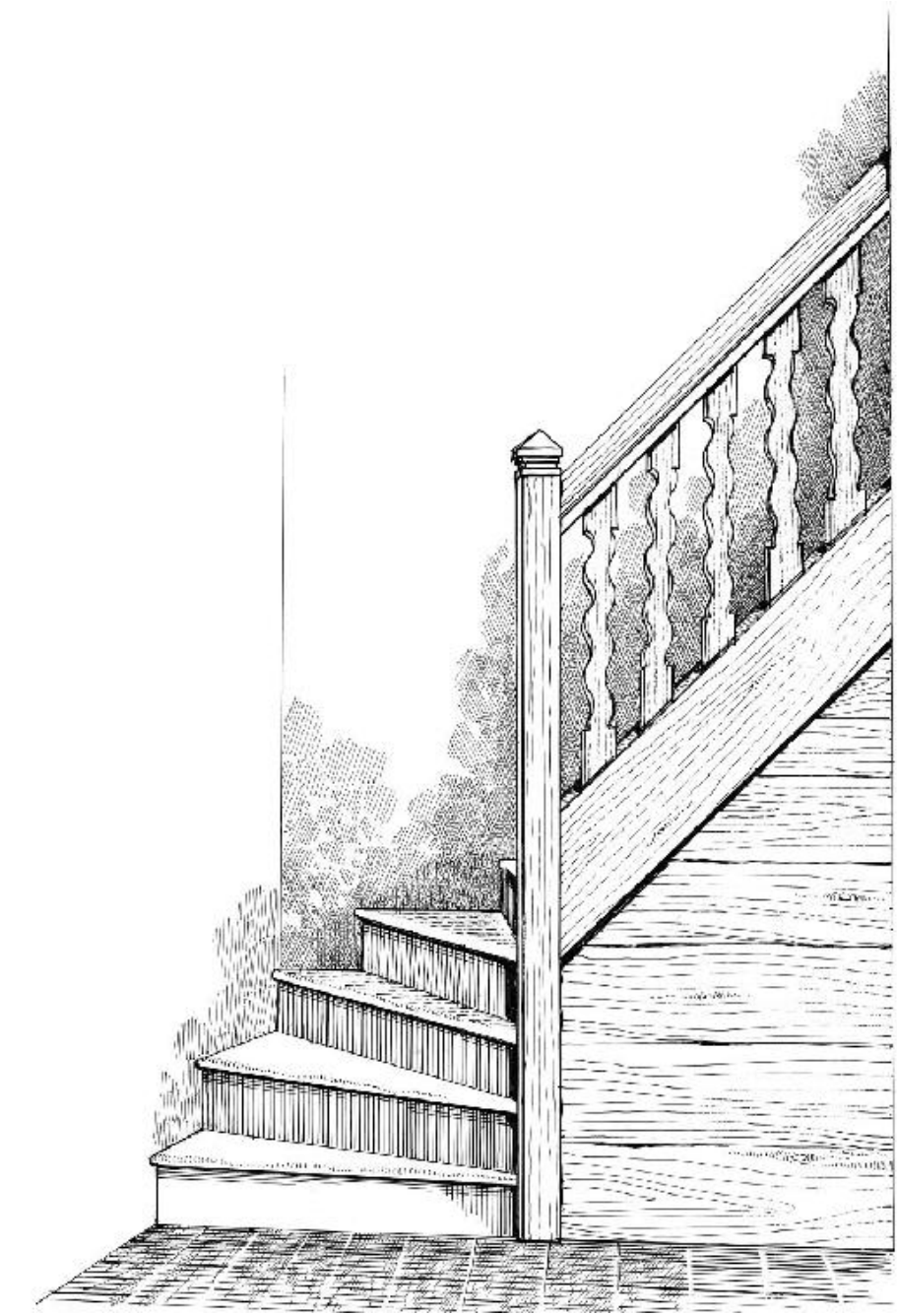


Figure 3.75 Detail of the surviving 17th-century stair within 10–11 High Town and its profile or 'splat' balusters

Historical background

The few bays of timber framing that have been uncovered at the rear of no. 20 are all that remains of a much larger building, the front of

which was rebuilt in the 19th century and the rear partly demolished in 1934 to make way for a new extension. Alfred Watkins, who saw the building before the rear part was destroyed, thought it was the Freemen's Prison, attached to the Boothall. However, there is no evidence for any civic function for the building: the present research places the Freemen's Prison on the east side of the Boothall, not the west.

An indenture for the Boothall, dated 1557, lists the names of those whose properties adjoined it as Matilda Bromwich, widow, on one part, and the land and tenement of William Rebold, gent., on the other.[77] Other evidence suggests that the Bromwich dwelling was on the west.[78] The Bromwich family were prosperous citizens of Hereford in the 16th century, Thomas Bromwich being mayor of Hereford in 1478.[79] Robert Bromwich, probably his son, was mayor in 1499.[80] He lived in Bisters Ward (a corruption of 'Bye Street') and in 1508 was presented and fined, with many others, for throwing dung into the 'Seyntuary house'. Robert, and his erring fellow citizens, were clearing out their stables and dumping the manure into cathedral property on the opposite side of East Street. It also implies that they lived within easy reach of the cathedral and probably on the south side of High Town.[81]

Richard Bromwich, probably a grandson of the first Robert, seems to have inherited the family property in High Town by 1563. He may have built no. 18 for his own use, but had moved to Church Street before his death.[82] The description shows that the premises were L-shaped and it may be significant that 19th-century plans show a garden, belonging to 18, running east behind 19.[83]

A painting, dating from the first years of the 19th century, shows the building on the left edge of the picture: a grand three-storey house with a driveway to the left and projecting windows on the first floor. This driveway has, erroneously, been associated with the Boothall (TWNFC 1919, 167). In fact, the Boothall, identifiable from the frontage erected in 1783, is depicted to the left.[84] Using the Boothhall and its tenants as a point of reference, it has been possible to identify a number of the later occupants of 18. The owner in the 1620s seems to have been Thomas Curtis, gent., who paid poor rate in this position and whose wife was licensed to sell ale. This is the earliest indication that the building was used as an inn, probably, in deference to the wool trade at the Boothall next door, called the Golden Fleece.[85]

The Hearth Tax places a Thomas Gilbert, in 1664, and a Richard Gilbert, in 1665, next to the Boothall tenants. They paid for five hearths and this, combined with the appearance of a Mrs Elizabeth

Gilbert in the Lawday records, presented for not fencing a tavern head, reinforces the presumption that, by this date, 18 was an inn.[86]

From 1697, the tenants of the property can be traced through the St Peter's poor rate lists.[87] In 1704, the occupant was William Bullock. His probate inventory, made on his death in 1709, calls him tanner and innholder.[88] The inventory lists three rooms claiming to be on the street frontage – the front ground-floor space was probably in use as a shop. It also lists two back rooms and implies that the chamber over the parlour – and therefore the parlour itself was also at the back, presumably in the two-storey range that contained the hall. The remaining rooms were a dining room, hall and kitchen. The dining room may well have been upstairs, over the hall.

The quit rents paid to St Ethelbert's Hospital between 1725 and 1732 give Edward Drew as the occupant and call the inn the Blue Boar, the earliest mention of the name. Obviously Drew sublet the property, because alongside his name is written 'Pugh's'. In 1737 David Daniel was the owner 'for the Blue Boar formerly the Golden Fleece'. This gives the earlier name for the inn, which may go back many years, perhaps, as has been suggested, to the early 17th century or before.[89] John Pugh, whose occupation is given as innholder in his will, died in 1725 but the property remained in the family.

In 1758, Margaret Pugh, widow, who must have been John Pugh's daughter-in-law, referred to the 'house where she lives known as the Blue Boar' and from this date it has a clearly defined history, being described as that 'Large Well accustomed house known as the Blue Boar, situate near the Market House' in 1771.[90] In the 19th century it became a grocer's and was then bought by Augustus Charles Edwards, draper, in 1869 and rebuilt as part of Alban House.[91]

Description

Two bays of a building that seems originally to have been of five bays survive. The structure is of two storeys with attics, and the first floor was jettied on the eastern side, where it once faced onto a narrow passage between this range and the Booth Hall to the east. Most of the framing of the jettied section has been removed but the richly moulded bressumer survives, as do the ornate brackets. The first-floor framing of the west frame survives, as does much of the wattle-and-daub infill of the frame panels; an intermediate post is of substantial scantling with a flaring jowled head. The framing on the west elevation is two rows high at this level, with three studs per bay. At either end of the northern bay there are straight up-braces from the posts to the wall-plates, but these do not exist in the southern bay. Instead, the southern bay has evidence for a primary three-light

window, centrally positioned, with remnants of iron hooks in the jamb.

Figure 3.76 The ceiling of 18 High Town after restoration, c.1990.

Figure 3.77 The exposed structure of the remarkable ceiling in the rear of 18 High Town, with a grid of moulded timbers beneath what was effectively a close-studded first floor

The northern gable frame has largely been cut away, but the jowled north-west corner post and the truss survives. Evidence in these timbers indicates that the framing at this level had three vertical studs and was probably of two rows of square panels with braces from the corner posts.

Most of the former cross-frame between the two surviving bays has been removed, but it appears to have been of a similar pattern to the northern end-frame – though perhaps with a doorway through it. In contrast, the present southern end of the structure was an open cross-frame – later infilled, presumably when the southern part of the building was demolished in 1934.

The main interest in the building is the construction of its floors and ceilings. The ground floor ceiling (i.e. the first-floor structure) is coffered, an effect achieved by introducing non-structural timbers into an otherwise very strong design. The main structure consists of the west–east first-floor girding-beams in the present end-frames and the intermediate bridging-beam; these oversail the wall-plate of the eastern ground-floor frame to support the bressumer and, where they do so, have additional support on either side of the ground-floor framing in the form of decorative curved brackets. Linking these beams is an interrupted north–south spine-beam into which are tenoned the structural, flat-laid, floor joists. Those to the west are

tenoned into the first-floor girding-beam, those to the east oversail the ground-floor framing and are tenoned into the side of the bressumer.

Cut into the flanks of these broad, plain, joists and high in the sides of the main cross-beams, are continuous grooves. These take the ends of laths snapped into place to act as the bed for heavy red plaster which, when set, became sufficiently strong to act as the first-floor flooring. It is, in effect, a close-studded frame laid horizontally. The precise constitution of the panel infill appears to be quite standard daub, rather than the lime-ash type of flooring seen, for example, in parts of the eastern Midlands.

The decorative part of the ceiling was effectively separate from this structural portion. The lower edges of the main beams were heavily moulded and effectively divide the ceiling into four quarters. Between the spine beam and the side-plates there are, in each quarter, two moulded beams below the level of the main ceiling. These, in turn, are linked by two additional moulded, interrupted, north–south axial beams. Each quarter is thus divided up into nine squares by moulded timbers, creating a grand coffered ceiling effect. This pattern survives in all but the north-western quadrant, and in this section the situation seems to have been a little different anyway – possibly marking the position of a primary stair.

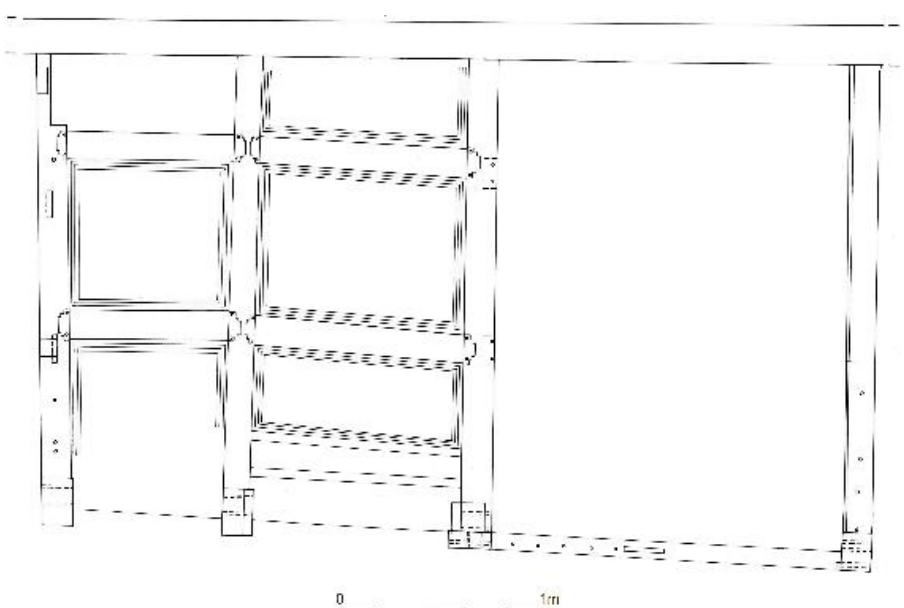


Figure 3.78 Drawing of a section of the ceiling/floor-frame structure of 18 High Town

The (evidently primary) attic floor is fairly plain but structurally

similar to the first-floor ceiling below, though lacking the decorative timberwork and consisting simply of the horizontal close-studding. At this level the principal beams in the ceiling were simply chamfered.

The available evidence indicates that the ground floor of the surviving section was one separate chamber with a staircase occupying part of the north-west quadrant. At first-floor level the stairs led into a north bay, partitioned-off from the south bay. It is possible that the north bay was, in turn, separated into two by a north–south frame, creating a stair head and an anteroom. There is evidence of a primary doorway in the east side of the bay frame. The present southern space was evidently only one part of a larger chamber as the present south frame was originally open.

The dating evidence is rather limited, depending on the style of the mouldings and the manner of construction of the ceilings. As it is obvious that only one part of a larger building survives (and that Watkins witnessed the demolition of the missing portion of it), it is thus important to try and link the surviving fabric with the information on the rest provided by Watkins.

The photographic evidence suggests that Watkins saw the southern three bays of the building being pulled down. The original building was thus of at least five bays, though the south gable was of brick by the time of its demolition. Watkins noted the absence of any obviously primary features in the ground-floor section, but the first floor seems to have been relatively intact.

The southern two bays seem to have formed a single chamber lit by an oriel window in the east frame. This cross-mullioned design, supported on two carved consoles, appears on Watkin's pre-demolition photographs. As well as the straight cants, it had three lights, all the timbers being moulded. The glazing stanchions, two per light, diagonally set, were of timber and although Watkins thought that they probably replaced original iron stanchions, this seems unlikely. A photograph of the room's ceiling shows it to be divided into four quadrants by the west–east tie-beam and a single spine beam. Each of the flat plaster panels has moulded surrounds and had a central boss and fleur-de-lys in the corners. The design is thus different to that of the surviving ground-floor ceilings but more elaborate than the surviving first-floor ceilings.

A smaller window in the first floor of the east frame lit the room immediately to the north, Watkins considering that to be an anteroom. In the framing between the two was a blocked doorway with concave chamfers and a four-centred head. Now that the rest of the building

has been located, it is clear that this anteroom was one half of a two-bay room – the northern part of which survives.

Unfortunately, it is not known whether the cellars noted by Watkin, with their segmental-headed stone doorways to north and east, survive; no cellars were found in the course of excavations in the front (or north) portion of the property in 1992.

Discussion

Fortunately, the remains of the timber-framed structure towards the rear of 18 High Town were not badly affected by the fire of October 2010. It is a building that challenges several assumptions about the city's architecture and its history.

Historically, it is clear that this fragment was part of the structure seen being demolished by Watkins in the 1930s – the so-called 'Freeman's Prison'. The fact that he thought that the entire building had been demolished is significant, as is what seems now to be an inaccuracy as to its identification. The size, and to a certain extent location, of the building did lead to suggestions that it may have been one of the city's guild halls, but the documentary history does not support such a thesis and the architectural evidence is fairly neutral. It seems on balance to have been part of a very grand merchant's house, though its date is uncertain. Certain stylistic features, such as the 'close-studded' floor construction and very rich mouldings suggest a date in the middle of the 16th century. On the other hand, the window photographed by Watkins in 1933 on the demolished southern section, and the jetty brackets, suggest a date towards the end of the century. On balance, a date in the second half of the century is suggested but only dendrochronology will properly resolve the issue.

Structurally, it is unusual in having both 'close-studded' floor structures and, on the ceiling of the ground-floor room, applied, moulded, ceiling timbers. Although identified in the adjacent building to the east – 16 High Town, destroyed in the fire – these have not been identified anywhere else in the city and do not seem to be a standard design in the region as a whole either. Similar 'close-studded' lath-and-plaster floors were, however, found at Southern's Stores, Northgate St, Gloucester, in a late 15th-century context (Moss and Spry 1972).

(24) The Mansion House, Widemarsh Street (Fig. 3.79; Plate 29)

Introduction

Renowned as the oldest brick house in Hereford, the Mansion House stands on the west side of Widemarsh Street, a little under half-way between High Town and the Widemarsh Gate. It was probably built shortly before 1697 and was the house of William Brewster, a well-known Hereford physician; its name derives from its use by the Mayor and Corporation for a period after 1771. Of two storeys and attics, its ground floor was badly damaged by the insertion of shops and shop-fronts in the early 20th century. Its plan is symmetrical: the first floor has a front and a back room either side of a central staircase and hall; the damaged ground floor may have been similar. There is now a modern (early 20th-century) passageway through the centre of the building providing pedestrian access westwards to a large car park behind the historic burgages; the ground floor is currently occupied by the Cellar Door restaurant on the left and Black & Sons clothes shop to the right.

Historical background

In 1697, part of the estate of bankrupt Hereford lawyer, Francis Griffith, came onto the market, and William Brewster, a prominent Hereford physician, was declared to be the 'best purchaser'. These properties included the Blew House and a row of adjacent houses in Widemarsh Street. Several of these are described as already built of brick; it seems that substantial redevelopment was taking place in the street and that the Mansion House, where William Brewster himself lived, was part of this redevelopment.[92]

By the time William Brewster died in 1715, the plot behind his house contained an inn and a bowling green as well as the dwelling-house garden. The documents make it clear that Brewster's house, not necessarily built by him, was erected by 1697.

Brewster's inventory implies that the house had a central hall with a main door to the street and, at the rear next to the staircase, a door to the garden.[93] There were two rooms on one side of the hall and two on the other; the same plan operated on the upper floors. Of this layout only the upper floors and the upper flights of the staircase survive.

It is not known what form the windows originally took but by the mid-18th century they were supplied with sashes, which were to be kept in repair.[94] William Brewster had no family and left his property first to his wife, Susan, and on her death to his executor, William Bridges of Tibberton. In 1763, Bridges made over the income from the dwelling house and garden, the bowling green and adjoining

buildings, to the City Council. This was to be used for the provision of a chaplain and spiritual comforts for the prisoners in the city and county gaols; any excess was to be used for the repair of the buildings.

In 1771, the Corporation advanced £100 for 'altering the same for the Mayor and Corporation' to use for their meetings. By 1785, in the rents and repairs section of the city accounts, the building had become known as the Mansion House.[95]

The bequest did not prove an unqualified success; repairs ate up the money intended for the charity. By 1796, 'the premises were much fallen into decay', and it was decided to sell them and invest the money.[96] The property went to John Sherburn, who was mayor of the city, and it has been claimed by Collins, ostensibly quoting Duncumb, that he rebuilt the house. However, the architecture is undoubtedly that of the late 17th century and Duncumb himself does not mention a rebuilding.[97]

The property passed to Sherburn's daughter and then to her husband, Alderman Charles Anthony. It was later sold to Samuel Farmer who, in turn, sold it to George Wright. It was at this time (1906/07) that the ground floor was gutted to accommodate a jam factory. The wall of the entrance hall was rebuilt to make a passage to the rear of the building and the staircase on the ground floor was removed.[98]

Description

Despite dating to the very end of the 17th century, the Mansion House is the oldest known surviving brick building in Hereford. It is a two-and-a-half storey, five-bay, brick-built structure aligned parallel to the street and faced on this elevation with finely cut red bricks laid to a Flemish bond.

The five windows at first-floor level have ovolo-chamfered surrounds which seem to be of stone or stucco but are heavily over-painted, making assessment difficult. The present thin-barred sashes are clearly not original and there would, presumably, have originally been timber cross-mullioned windows instead. The heads of these windows are some way below the wall-plate.

At either end of the facade are plain stone pilasters; these have no capitals. The elevation is topped by a very elaborately carved, timber, dentilled cornice. Above it are dormer windows in each bay, with alternating pedimented and flat heads. While the upper sections of this main elevation are more or less primary, the ground floor clearly is not. It now has shop-fronts either side of the central passageway through the building. Despite alterations, this is all part of an early

20th-century composition.

The rear elevation seems to have suffered a degree of rebuilding. There are rear extensions butting against the elevation on either side of the central passageway. These extensions cut through and partly obscure the elevation, though it also seems to have been of five bays. There is a brick band of three courses at first-floor level, and another, of two courses, a little below the eaves, marking the level of the second, or attic, floor.

The rear opening to the passageway is quite crude and it evidently cuts into the base of what would have been a taller mezzanine window. This was clearly the central feature of the elevation, as it had a raised border of rubbed bricks and the flat-arched brick head projects slightly from this border and has an upper moulding echoing masonry work. The steel-framed window in the reduced opening is modern and ill-judged, as is the window above, cutting through the upper band course. The other first-floor windows also have rubbed brick flat-arched heads and, on the principal elevation, the sashes of the two northern, or left-hand, windows are clearly not original; the window to the south of the centre has an even more modern steel frame. On this elevation there are now just two dormers, both with moulded pediments. The roof is a double-piled 'M-section' structure, hipped and slated.

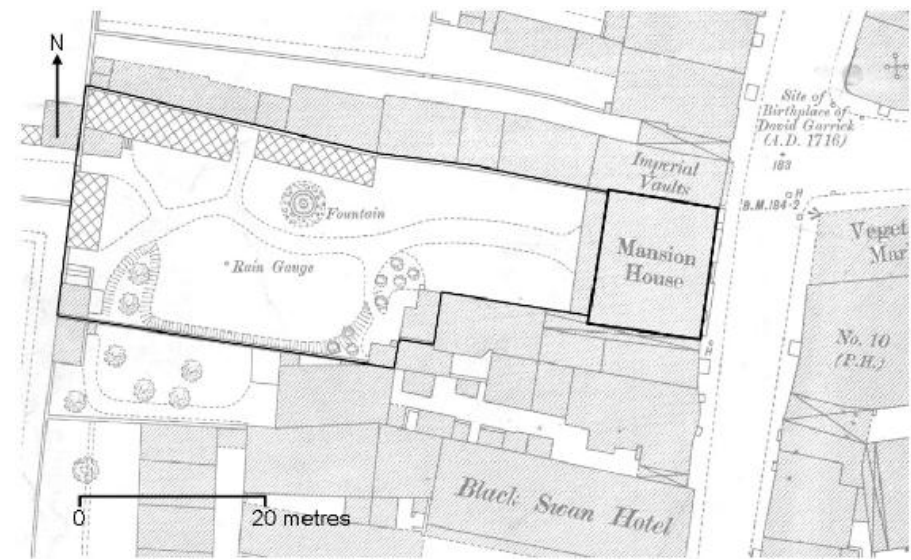


Figure 3.79 Location plan for the Mansion House (building 24), Widemarsh Street, based on the first edition Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1884 – pre-dating its conversion to shops and the insertion of an entry, bisecting the house and its ancient plot

The ground floor is now taken up by modern full-depth shops either side of the central pedestrian passageway. Extrapolating a plan from that surviving at first-floor level, it seems likely that the passageway occupies the position of an original entrance hall with a stair to the rear, lit by the mezzanine window. To either side would have been two rooms separated by a spine wall. The stair is of dogleg design with half-landings against the rear wall, with a chunky 'toad's back' hand-rail and substantial bottle balusters. The stairs survive from the first half-landing upwards. Some balusters have been replaced with chunky 'stick' balusters. Much of the dado, of raised and fielded panels, also survives. The stairs rose to what was probably a full-depth landing area on the first floor and there were front and rear rooms to either side. The spine wall between the two northern first-floor rooms has been removed.

Discussion

The Mansion House – of *c.*1697 – is, it seems, the oldest known surviving brick town-house in Hereford. The documentary evidence suggests that the building was certainly standing by that date, when it was bought by William Brewster, and could have been built a few years earlier as part of the development of this area by the lawyer, William Griffith. As other buildings in that redevelopment also seem to have been built of brick, the Mansion House was not a 'one-off'. Nor was it the first brick house ever built in the city: as we have seen (p. 141), Joyce Jeffries' house on Widemarsh Street was built in brick between 1630 and 1645, but it did not survive the Civil War, and a short distance west of the city, on White Cross Road, Price's Almshouses had been built partly in brick in *c.*1665 (RCHM 1931, 131–2). But in the context of the intramural city's surviving architectural legacy, the Mansion House is doubly significant. Not only is it the earliest surviving brick house, it also represents the earliest occurrence of a *designed* house, with a symmetrical floor-plan and facade, by an architect or mason, influenced by the introduction of Renaissance ideas into England early in the century by architects such as Inigo Jones, and later by Webb, Pratt and Wren. Such designs at first percolated into the provinces slowly and erratically, subject to the variability of local patronage, spreading faster later on with the publication of pattern books.

In plan-form and design, as much as in ornament, the medieval past had finally been abandoned. And yet – while timber-framed town-houses were no longer built – timber-framing as a viable structural technique continued, discreetly, everywhere: unseen or rendered-over in back walls, passage walls and internal partitions.

Notes

1 HRO Hereford City Archives Great Black Book p. 932
2 Shoesmith and Eisel 2004, 41
3 HRO F35 RC/MII/374
4 HRO Hereford City Archives Lawday 1655 – he should not be confused with the John Jones who, at the same date, kept the Swan and Falcoln at the corner of Broad Street and Packers Lane; HRO AG 7/22
5 HRO Hereford City Archives Lawday 1660. A John Jones, carrier, either the same man or a relative, operated from the Essex Arms at about the same date.
6 HRO James Pasey 30th May 1706, administration and inventory
7 HRO Hereford City Archives Lawday 1667
8Mrs Powell, Wyllox Bridge Farm, Allensmore, HR2 9AP. Most of the deeds and papers directly dealing with the building come from this source.
9HRO BG11/26/3
10R 613 From Dean and Chapter Common Rents HCL
7020/3/1, 2
11 *Hereford Citizen and Bulletin* 19th Feb 1954
12 Deed in the possession of the Powell family *c.*1995
13 HCL 7031/2 p. 15
14 HCL 7031/2 p. 140, 145v
15 HCL 4512; 5351
16 HCL 7020/2/1 & 2
17 HCL 4513
18 HRO Q/RD/4/2
19 HRO AG 7/22
20 HRO Inventory John Rawlins 17th Feb 1715
21 HRO Hereford City Archives, Great Black Book f 66
22 HRO Hereford City Archives Misc. Mss Vol. 1 1687 (but probably ten years out of date); Chamberlains' Accounts, Box I Rent Roll 1694
23 Town hall deeds P1/5
24 HRO Hereford City Archives G.H.I/160–171
25 HRO K38/cd/6 Box 1
26 HRO T51/4607(i)
27 HRO T51/4607(ii)
28 City Archives Misc. Mss Vol 1, 1687/8
29 HRO GH1/603–614
30 HRO T51/4153
31 Hearth tax 1664 microfilm X90; Hearth Tax 1665 (transcript)
32 HRO Probate Sybil Lane Widow 31st Oct 1678
33 HRO GH1/439
34 HRO Hereford City Archives Misc. Mss Vol 1, 1687/8
35 HRO GH1/439
36 HCL 3861; 4507; 4510
37 HRO Hearth Tax 1664, 1665; Admon and Inv, Francis Trapp
18th Oct 1689
38 HRO Will John Darke 22nd Nov 1777
39 Guildhall Library, Sun Life Office 389908 (Ms. 11936/261)
40 HCL 4509(xi–xiv)
41 Hereford Times November 18th 1837; September 17th 1839; December 8th 1848

42 HRO A 63/III/5/2
43 HRO Hereford City Archives Court of Tourn (transcript) 1654
44 HRO Hereford City Archives Court of Tourn (transcript) 1654
45 HRO AC 7/22; P9 KLC9156
46 Hereford City Library, Pilley Collection, Vol. 2272, p. 197
47 HRO Hereford City Archives Lawday 1661
48 HRO Hereford City Archives Lawday 1625, 1628. Note that there were at least four John Jones in the area in the 17th century: a butcher, a carrier, and the landlords of the Swan and Falcon and the King's Head.
49 HRO Hereford City Archives, Court of Tourn 1622 (from typescript)
50 HCL 3364
51 HRO Hereford City Archives Misc. Docs
52 HRO Hereford City Archives Lawday 1576–99, 1582
53 HRO Hereford City Archives Lawday 1618–40, 1618
54 HRO Hereford City Archives Lawday Records 1617–40, 1628

55 HRO Hereford City Archives Lawday Records 1617–40, 1627
56 HRO Hereford City Archives Lawday Records 1617–40, 1619
57 HRO Hereford City Archives list of mayors – Handlist to Hereford City Archives
58 HRO O57/1
59 HRO Hereford City Archives GH1/790–9
60 Deeds in the National Library of Wales
61 Deeds in the owner's possession
62 Hereford Cath Lib 7003/1/1 p. 169; 3364; 3365; eg WRO Lawday 1636
63 Hereford Cath Lib 7003/1 VI, p. 169
64 TNA prob 11/78
65 HRO Transcripts of Sacks 8–14
66 HRO Transcripts of Sacks 15–19, pp. 345–6
67 Title deeds in owner's possession
68 HWRO A39/162; Pigot's 1835 Directory
69 Census records; Hereford Commercial Prospectuses p. 39; Littlebury's Directory 1867
70 HRO A 63/III/5/1
71 Worcs RO BA 81/1145
72 HRO AF86/8
73 TNA PROB 11/518
74 HRO Inland Revenue Maps
75 HRO Richard Andrews 30th March 1685
76 This could either have been a large cupboard or an apparatus for pressing cloth.
77 HRO Hereford City Archives Great Black Book p. 174
78 *Ibid* f. 120v, 276
79 HRO Hereford City Archives Lawday 1478
80 HRO Hereford City Archives Tourn 1499
81 HRO Hereford City Archives Tourn 1508
82 TNA PROB 11/109
83 *Ibid* f. 120v, 276; Curley 1856; HRO BH 22/10
84 GH 1/61
85 Hereford Cath Lib 5254
86 HRO Lawday 1676

87 HRO AC 7/22
88 Will of William Bullock, 1709
89 HCL 5253, 5254, 6442
90 HRO BD 63/2/2 parcel 4; quoted in the *Citizen and Bulletin* Dec 10th 1754
91 HRO Corporation deeds Box 1
92 F. C. Morgan, in his otherwise enlightening article on William Brewster, suggests that Brewster pulled down some of these houses to build the Mansion House, and this has later been taken to include the Blew House; not only is there nothing about this demolition in the available deeds, but Brewster's will (K11 2127), mentions the Blew House as standing in 1715. HRO K11 3594, 6931, 6689, K11 2127; F.C. Morgan 1963, 'Dr William Brewster of Hereford'; AE45/1, 2, 3
93 K12/36
94 HRO A81/II 205
95 HRO BG 11/24/3:H16/A 3–4 *passim*
96 HRO AE45/1
97 HRO AL 85 A plan (prob 1853) contained within a very complicated and confusing abstract of title purports to portray 'the said premises erected on the site or formed *out of part of the site* of a larger messuage'. Collins 1988, p. 85; Duncomb 1804 Vol 1, p. 400
98 HRO BO38/5/187; BO38/5156 a,b,c.; BO38/1/59 1918

4

Discussion and conclusions

Nigel Baker, Pat Hughes and Richard Morriss

Fitting into the framework: houses and house-plots

It is highly probable that all, or all but two, of the 24 case-study buildings were built on plots that were already old or even ancient. The possible exception is the Essex Arms (Building 16) on Widemarsh Street, which was built in the mid-17th century at the furthest, wettest, end of a suburb on a plot that was probably medieval but might not previously have been built on. The majority of the buildings though, were new, replacement, buildings on plots that had been built up, or built on, for many centuries. For example, the earliest case-study building on High Town (part of no. 27 – Building 9) was erected *c.*1600 on a site that had probably been continually built up for five centuries previously. The former Farmers' Club on Widemarsh Street (Building 18) was built early in the 17th century on another, at that time, 500-year-old plot, with an awkwardly skewed plan forced on it by the pre-existing constraints of the street, the neighbouring properties, and the medieval city wall.

However, amongst the case-study buildings there is a significant group of medieval buildings that do not, or need not, obey the rules for densely built-up plots orientated to service a commercial frontage. These are the Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace (Building 1) and the canonical residences: 20 Church Street, 29 Castle Street and Harley Court (Buildings 3, 5 and 4), to which may be added the Cathedral Barn (Building 2), moved from an unknown location but, plausibly, from a canonical residence nearby. The canonical plots represent an unsolved problem in the historical geography of Hereford. They are one of the glories of its historic townscape – large or very large ancient properties, unbuilt-up and undivided, right at the heart of the modern city. Many of their boundaries are noticeably rectilinear,

particularly in the block north of the Close, between Broad Street and St John Street, forming, as a group, one of the planned landscapes of central Hereford. One of the other planned landscapes – the street grid around Berrington Street – is demonstrably pre-Conquest; quite possibly the canonical plots are too. The logic of the canonical plots seems to be that they face into the open space around the cathedral and on to Castle Street, with the canonical residences clustered near but not necessarily on, the Close or Castle Street frontages. They occupy both sides, some at least of the northern plots perhaps extending right back to the defences, the southern plots to the river, and of the southern plots the greatest that survives is the bishop's.

The historical evidence for Harley Court (Building 4) adds to this picture. That property was, unusually for a canonical residence, administered by the Dean and Chapter rather than the bishop. The reason is most probably that the Harley Court property was formerly part of the Deanery, whose northern boundary it adjoins. In other words the Deanery plot too is likely, before the 13th century, to have extended back to the Anglo-Saxon defences along East Street, as the plots further down Castle Street did, and those around Church Street to the west may once have done.

The historical evidence from 20 Church Street (Building 3) adds a complication: that was built in 1328 by amalgamating two canonical houses in Cabache Lane (Church Street) that had become too small. Where would they have been? Unresolved structural oddities in the cellar under the hall suggest that one of the pre-1328 houses may have stood on the same site. In 1397 the property included houses on the other side of the road, presumably the west side of Church Street, which could have been the boundary between the pre-1328 plots. There is, as yet, no answer, though this 1328 amalgamation, the sub-division of the Deanery plot, and the much better-known amalgamation of two canonical houses east of the Bishop's Palace to provide the site for the College of the Vicars' Choral in 1472, all serve as reminders that the medieval canonical plots, like burgages, were subject to constant change and cannot always, or in detail, be simply read off a modern map.

There are many uncertainties also in the planning of the canonical buildings in relation to their surroundings, though the general trend is, as described above, for proximity to the Cathedral Close (see Fig. 2.3). The historical evidence shows that the 20 Church Street complex had a close relationship with Church Street, the surviving first-floor hall having been towards the rear (but not the rearmost) of a group of buildings that, at least in the 16th century, included shops on the

frontage, chambers and service rooms. Access to the principal building seems to have been into its north side, from the west. By way of comparison, Canon's House, 3 St John Street, the next-but-one canonical house east of 20 Church Street, also facing a north–south street, has been found to have a simpler, more conventional, urban layout with a ground-floor hall of *c*.1400 behind and at right-angles to jettied frontage ranges said to contain 16th- and 17th-century fabric (Shoesmith 1998). But that is what survives; its medieval form may have been more complex. It is not known where the 13th-century aisled barn now called the Cathedral Barn was moved from: the possibility that it was moved just a few feet, from Canon's House, cannot be dismissed. The only real answer to the form and the origin of the canonical houses lies in further excavation, particularly in and immediately around them.

The last of the ancient ecclesiastical plots to be considered is the bishop's. One view of the Bishop's Palace is that it occupies another (and by far the largest) of the general east–west series of plots, as discussed, with a frontage onto the Cathedral Close and a tail extending back down to the river. The position of the surviving great hall appears to relate to the earlier, late 11th-century, two-storeyed chapel of Bishop Losinga to the north – which was aligned along the southern frontage of the open space around the (later) cathedral church – and also to the courtyard to the west. The palace courtyard has received little attention and the extent of survival of early fabric there is not known, though the retaining walls at its north-west corner are coursed sandstone of early medieval appearance. This is, however, the most likely location for the service ranges, lodgings and stables associated with a major medieval household, including the missing kitchen; the courtyard is accessed from the outside via its gatehouse directly off the end of Broad Street. Losinga's chapel also faced west, just outside the palace courtyard. How the surviving hall, or the courtyard, relates to the pre-12th-century palace buildings is not known, though their alignment is slightly different to that of the earlier episcopal chapel to the north (Blair 1987).

With the further exceptions of the outermost case studies – the Essex Arms (Building 16) on Widemarsh Street, surrounded by orchards, and Pool Farm (Building 8), set along the roadside in an expansive town-edge plot – the remaining houses in this volume were all built on densely built-up urban streets, and this was reflected in the planning of their constituent parts. Most crowded of all were the narrow plots or burgages facing into High Town, the Anglo-Norman market place and still the core of Hereford's retailing sector. In this

situation, where competition for scarce trading-frontage space would have been strongest, it is no surprise to find the buildings and their rooms arranged at right-angles to the street, running down the length of the narrow plot: this can be seen at 26 and 27 High Town (Building 9), the former King's Head Inn, in the high-status two-storey block at the rear of 18 High Town with its curious ceiling (Building 23), and, on the northern frontage, in the warehouse range at the rear of 10–11 High Town (Building 22). All of these buildings are of the 16th or 17th centuries; they were built on plots that would formerly have been occupied by buildings built in the late medieval period, and it might be expected that these too would have been subject to the same conditions and to have been planned in a similar way. The limited evidence available suggests this was indeed the case. The recorded (but currently inaccessible) 15th-century undercrofts below 21 and 22 High Town and 10 St Peter's Street were arranged in this way, with a narrow, one-room wide plan at right-angles to the frontage. Just one medieval open hall survives in this street block, the 15th-century Booth Hall, with its spectacular hammer-beam roof. As a public building it lies, strictly speaking, beyond the remit of this volume but is nevertheless relevant in its planning, its carpentry and its decoration, and being one of Hereford's finest medieval secular buildings, it cannot be ignored. The hall lies some way back from the main frontage (roughly mid-way between High Town and East Street), at right-angles to High Town and accessed via an alleyway along its east side. The rear range of 18 High Town, next door, was similarly accessed and partly lit from an alleyway running down the side of the plot between it and the Booth Hall.

These are the remnants of and successors to the very common form of medieval tenement planning described 50 years ago by W. A. Pantin (1962–63, 228–33) as the 'right-angle type/narrow plan' arrangement, in which the open hall would be built at right-angles to the frontage, usually with a shop with chambers over on the front and services to the rear. Access down the plot was a critical design factor, so too was lighting the hall, and both were most commonly achieved by a side passage. In extreme cases access fore-and-aft was achieved by a passageway within the width of the hall, possibly by a gallery at first-floor level to enable communication between the chamber over the shop and any upper storey accommodation at the rear. Pantin illustrated examples of this plan-form from Chester, Exeter and York; it occurs also in Bristol at 97 Redcliff Street and 51 Corn Street (Leech 2014, chapter 5). Examples closer to hand are surprisingly scarce, probably because they were particularly characteristic of high-streets

and other main streets where (like High Town) they were a product of intense competition, but almost inevitably fell victim to it as the redevelopment of retail centres continued and the scale of businesses expanded – with consequences in terms of plot amalgamations and replaced buildings. One nearby example that does survive is the Golden Lion, on the High Street in Worcester, built *c*.1400 over an undercroft (used as a tavern) with a shop on the frontage with two chambers over, and an open hall behind containing a gallery at first-floor level to give access from the front to rooms over the rear services (Quiney 2003, 251).

Although no complete medieval plan-forms of this kind are known to survive in High Town, the two buildings examined nearby on Commercial Street are relevant. On the north side, no. 25 (Building 12) was found to have a mid-16th-century two-storey range, behind and at right-angles to the frontage, that may represent a 'ceiled hall', succeeding a medieval open hall, with a later cross-wing behind and a replaced frontage block on the street. The plot would have been accessed and lit via the alleyway which still runs down the west side of the plot.

Across the street is the surviving two-bay medieval open hall at the rear of no. 50a (Building 7). This is at right-angles to the frontage (which has been rebuilt) and it is suggested, or speculated, that a blocked original doorway at first-floor level in the rear wall may have been accessed via stairs within the hall, later removed, or could have been reached via a gallery from the frontage. From the surviving remains of the hall alone, this looks like another 'right-angle type/ narrow-plan' tenement. However, the documentary evidence seems to tell a different story. First, the hall appears to have been part of a very large block of property, a capital messuage, belonging to the Hyde family. A detailed inventory of 1567 includes a long list of rooms, at least some of which were grouped around a courtyard. The hall may, as built, have been part of a much wider plot with more expansive planning than now appears to be the case. Post-medieval sub-division of the properties here was intensive: even the remains of the open hall were split longitudinally, and the roof sawn-through to do so.

No. 50a Commercial Street is instructive in that the historic building remains show that the plot-pattern or 'townscape grain', whether surviving or what was recorded by the Ordnance Survey in the late 19th century, cannot always be taken to represent what was there in the Middle Ages. Towards the edges of the commercial centre, Bridge Street and Widemarsh Street offer further examples. Bridge Street, in particular, was shown by the O.S. in 1888 lined with long

and quite narrow plots, typical 'burgage plots' in other words, and this is largely its character today. However, examination of the late medieval building surviving at 41a Bridge Street (Building 6) shows that it had formerly been attached to one end of an open hall lying across the width of several modern plots, just behind the frontage: there had, *c.*1400, been one wide plot rather than the narrow ones there today. The relationship of the medieval hall to the mapped property boundaries around and behind it suggests that space for this expansive layout was achieved by acquiring land from the plots either side, while leaving the original backlands, or plot-tails, more or less untouched further to the rear. At the south end of Widemarsh Street, surviving medieval undercrofts reveal that four modern properties (nos. 2–5) occupy the space of a single, very wide, plot in the 15th century (Chapter 1).

These properties are significant for two reasons. First, as discussed, they betray a dislocation between the modern and the medieval townscape. There are, in the city, many very narrow plots of classic 'burgage-plot' type – 14 Church Street (Building 11) is another good example of a narrow plot with late 16th-century buildings built down its length, accessed off a side passage. But changes may have taken place since the late Middle Ages and the apparent lateral extent of plots like this cannot be taken for granted. In Hereford, it may well be that the occurrence of large numbers of consistently very-narrow plots was a feature only of High Town.

The second point to be made is that 41a Bridge Street and 2–5 Widemarsh Street, together with the 13th-century undercrofts of the former Greyhound Hotel site at the eastern end of Eign Gate, are Hereford examples of another recurrent medieval tenement plan-form, what Pantin described as the 'Parallel type/double-range plan' (Pantin 1962–63, 217–23). The essence of this is that the hall is built parallel to the street, across the width of the plot, but set back behind a commercial frontage; it is another manifestation of the active medieval property market, in this case with an entrepreneurial figure (or institution) extracting multiple rents from a trading frontage. The example *par excellence* given by Pantin was Tackley's Inn in Oxford, but he further illustrated it with examples drawn from Bristol, Coventry and Southampton. Since the 1960s, many more examples of this plan-form have been identified in towns in the Midlands. In Chester, 38–42 Watergate Street was built in this way in the 14th century with the hall across the plot at the rear of three shops, its cross-passage accessible via an entry between them, and three undercrofts beneath; there was a similar arrangement at 48–52 Bridge

Street (Brown 1999, 24–7). In Shrewsbury in particular this can be seen to have been a common pattern of building from *c.*1300 into the early 15th century, with plots up to eighty feet (*c.*25 m) wide and up to six shops on the frontage (Baker 2010b, 169–73). In Worcester too, the type is evident at the Earl's Post, a high-status property built *c.*1240 on the west side of the High Street (Hughes and Leech 2011, 10–11). Whether such wide plots were common in 13th-century town centres and could just be acquired, or whether they had to be assembled from smaller contiguous plots, we do not know. But they did not survive well after the Middle Ages, becoming sub-divided, generally on the line of the frontage tenancies, the halls themselves often fracturing on the line of the cross-passage, as can still be seen, for example, at Barley Hall in York. In parts of central Bristol, the evolution of cross-passages into public thoroughfares was common enough for the term 'through-house' to be coined to describe a hall thus affected, and it was a phenomenon recorded as early as 1446 (Leech 2014, 114–15).

The less-intensive use of a wide plot frontage, with a dwelling rather than shops arranged along it, is apparent both in and after the medieval period, and may signify either the affluence of an owner-builder making this possible, or lower property values in the locality at the time of building. It is apparent, for example, in peripheral locations: at Pool Farm, *c.*1500 (Building 8), beyond the St Martin's suburb, or at a fairly humble social level at the Essex Arms at the far end of the Widemarsh Street suburb, *c.*1650 (Building 16). But within the walls, right to the end of our period, such a leisurely, residential, use of street frontage was the preserve of the very wealthy. As is shown by the early 17th-century former Farmers' Club (Building 18), just within the Widemarsh Gate, built for a family of recurrent mayoral office-holders. No. 50a St Owen Street (Building 13) is comparable in this respect: three chambers spread along the frontage, just inside the city gate (though a good deal further from the centre than the former Farmers' Club). It was built *c.*1600 on a capital messuage, part of a large, early property conveyed not long before by a gentleman's widow to a gentleman. While its design and materials take us into a different world, the Mansion House on Widemarsh Street (Building 24) was also an extravagant use of intramural frontage, in that case in the 1690s.

Finally, there is a group of buildings that have in common the fact that, in one way or another, they were encroachments upon the public realm of the medieval town. The Old House of 1621 (Building 17) is the most widely known, the sole survivor of the medieval rows that

occupied the eastern end of High Town. It is typical of its kind, though more substantial than many, in that it had no attached property – it was part of a row, surrounded by public open space. The term 'encroachment' here is mere shorthand: the origin of the High Town rows is not likely to lie in surreptitious private gain (like the 'bulkes' or stall-boards obstructing the pavement for which thrusting retailers were fined): their origin was almost certainly official, planned, an addition to corporation revenues. To this may be added the two properties examined that were bounded by, and built on top of, the medieval city wall. Wyebridge House (Building 14), a 'mansion house' built behind the Bridge Street frontage in the late 16th or early 17th century, was built with its south elevation rising from the city wall close to its junction with the Wye Bridge. The former Farmers' Club, slightly later, also took advantage of the gradual de-militarisation of the city wall, its north elevation built on top of it *c*.1617, and the foot of the wall pierced by the doorway, dated 1626, to Thomas Church's garden outside.

Internal planning before 1500 (Fig. 4.1)

Out of the eight pre-16th-century case-study buildings, one was found to be a barn; the remainder are, or contained, or were attached to, open halls – that is to say, the principal room of a medieval house, usually heated and open from the floor to the roof. Of these seven buildings, in five it is the open hall only (or part of it) that survives from the medieval period: at the Bishop's Palace (two bays out of four), 20 Church Street, 29 Castle Street, 50a Commercial Street, and at Pool Farm. At the latter, two attached ranges and a porch survive too, but are of slightly later date (16th-and 17th-century); at 41a Bridge Street it is the cross-wing of a hall that survives, not the hall itself. Only in Harley Court does a two-storey bay survive at what may be the high end of the two-bay open hall – the services (buttery, pantry, kitchen and so on) are all missing. It has also been pointed out that this two-storey end is unusual in that it is in-line with the hall, rather than forming a perpendicular cross-wing (James 2008).

The distinction between the high end and the low end of the hall can be read in most of these survivors, from the usually fragmentary evidence of original access and heating. At the Bishop's Palace hall, the main entrance from the courtyard is placed in the second bay from the north end; the doorway in the back (east) wall, leading via a pentice to the chamber block, lay directly opposite. Although not a cross-passage in the fully developed high medieval sense (there is no evidence of a partition or screen between it and the hall, and it is not

against the end wall), the presence of the opposed doorways – and the draughts they imply – probably indicate that this was the 'low' end of the hall, with the high end to the south adjoining the storeyed block overlooking the river. Of this storeyed south end, John Blair considered it 'best seen as a subsidiary chamber-block over proto-services, not as a precursor of the standard late medieval solar wing'; he went on to comment that 'its prodigious three storeys over a basement, is, after Wolvesey, the grandest now known: a testimony to the wealth and status of the 12th-century see' (Blair 1987, 67). As discussed earlier, the location of the kitchen is unknown, though one of the courtyard ranges to the west seems most likely. The jury is, then, still out, on the question of the internal geography of the bishop's hall. Given that the remaining roof has lost its clerestory, and with it, any evidence of a smoke louvre, only excavation beneath the present floor could reveal the position of a central hearth. And, as John Blair noted, the undercroft of what is assumed to have been the detached chamber block to the east should still lie, undisturbed, below the bishop's lawn, a tempting target for archaeological investigation. The Bishop of Worcester's medieval palace has recently been very successfully re-investigated; the reconsideration of the Bishop of Hereford's palace – as a whole – is arguably now overdue.

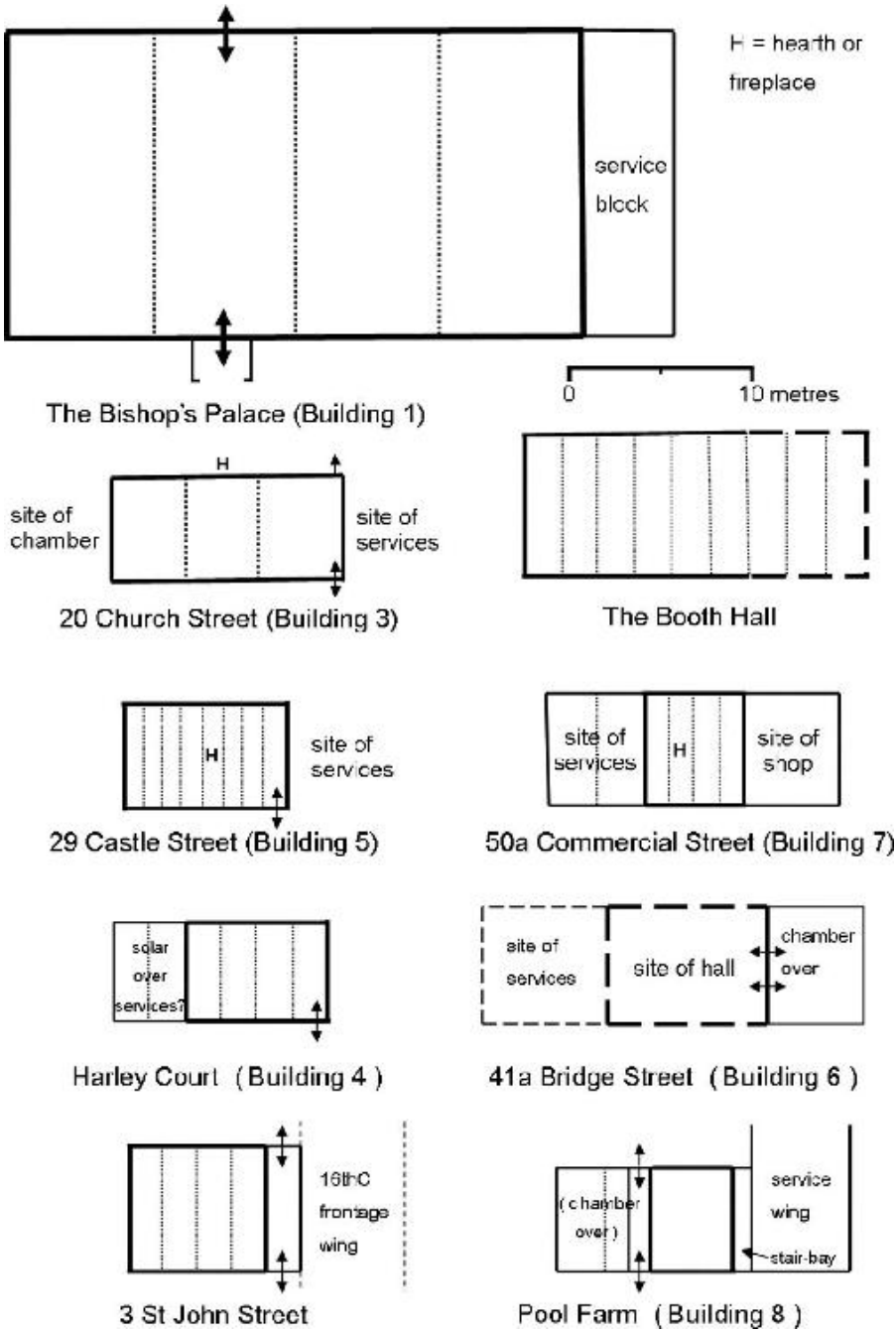


Figure 4.1 Schematic comparative plans of medieval open halls in Hereford. Dotted lines indicate roof bay divisions, arrows indicate known access points

No. 20 Church Street (Building 3), the canonical open hall of 1328, despite the singularity of its placing at first-floor level, articulates the distinction between the high and low ends more clearly. In the hall,

there is evidence of opposed doorways at the west end of each side wall: on the north side, probably from an external staircase oriel, on the south side, possibly into a projecting garderobe chamber. On the floor below, the west gable-end wall shows evidence of a pair of doorways side-by-side, suggestive of entries to service rooms (traditionally the buttery and pantry). The limited evidence for the access arrangements seem to suggest that the west end, nearest Church Street, was the low or service end; the heating arrangements do not shed any further light on this, the wall fireplaces at each level being placed centrally in the long wall of the three-bay hall. All traces above ground of the building east of the hall were destroyed by demolition in 1723; it is suggested though that this is the site of the 'six-post' (two-bay) chamber ordered built in 1397.

No further light can be shed at this point on why this open hall was built at first-floor level. Several parallels in the region were discussed, the closest, geographically and in date, being a number of mercantile halls in Shrewsbury. These, however, are nearly all cut into gradients, their undercrofts being half-basements serving as levelling-up platforms for the halls above (Baker 2010b); this is not the case at 20 Church Street. Inter-visibility with the cathedral church is a possibility, though the precinct wall was not, as far as we know, built across the close frontage until 1389 and none of the other canonical houses was similarly designed – again, as far as we know.

At Harley Court (Building 4), in the early 15th century, the high end is evident only from the surviving two-storey bay on the east end of the two-bay open hall, suggestive of a (very small) solar over a service room; this is at least consistent with the probability of access, as now, being from the west end, though it is inconsistent with the upper faces of the trusses facing west. A light in the west wall and a doorway at the west end of the south wall of the medieval cellar suggest that the present west wall of the hall was an external wall; the Deanery garden lies immediately to the south, leaving only the unexplored north side of the hall (covered by the neighbouring building) as a possible site for services. How/where the hall was heated is not known though the present stack is centrally placed in its south wall and may have replaced an original. At 29 Castle Street (Building 5), the high-end/low-end distinction is much clearer from the opposed doorways at the north, street-end, of the hall; the position of the smoke louvre in the middle bay of the nine narrow bays in its roof shows that the central hearth was indeed placed centrally. The presumed service block would have been on the street frontage, the hall being positioned some 5 m back from it, but this had gone by

1578.

Only at Pool Farm (Building 8) is a more complete hall-house plan evident and here too, everything other than the hall was built later than *c*.1500. This is a two-bay open hall and in this instance the cross-passage is fully developed, separated from the hall by a full-height closed partition, with the chamber at first-floor level oversailing it; on the ground floor beyond the passage is a single room. At the opposite, north, end of the hall is a slightly later, narrow (1.2 m) timber-framed bay that may have been a stair tower, giving access to a northern cross-wing of two storeys, within which there was a larger and a smaller chamber at first-floor level and, in the western bay, open to the roof with smoke blackening, probably a kitchen.

Throughout this discussion of plan-forms, an important element that has been missing is the commercial street frontage – the shop. Only two of the surviving pre-1500 buildings discussed (41a Bridge Street and 50a Commercial Street) can be considered of purely secular/commercial origin, built for householders engaged in trade or manufacture, though 20 Church Street, a canonical property, drew rents from shops on Church Street in 1428; these had gone by the late 18th century and the medieval frontage remains unoccupied (and therefore of some archaeological sensitivity). In all of these case-studies, the surviving medieval fabric is well behind the contemporary frontage. While medieval shops and shop-fronts have survived in the small decayed borough of Weobley (James 2011), it seems that they may not have in Hereford. The expectation from neighbouring county towns would be that Hereford's main trading streets would have been being built up with two-storey structures by about 1200 and these, from the documentary (charter) evidence for Shrewsbury, would generally have followed the 'shops and solars' (*solario*) formula with living space over trading space (Baker 2010b, 124). By the beginning of the 15th century, three-storey frontages are to be expected on the main central streets: examples survive in some numbers in Shrewsbury from *c*.1400 to the 1460s, and at the Golden Lion in Worcester; two-storey frontages can be expected on secondary streets (i.e. not through-traffic streets) within the walls. Single-storey buildings, particularly crucks, were to be found in the suburbs – examples survive in the suburbs of Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth. They were also characteristic of small-town centres, such as Much Wenlock, and rural areas. Their banishment from the central streets of the larger towns belongs to an earlier episode, which may one day be discernable from the archaeological evidence. In Hereford, a medieval frontage range has recently (2012) been discovered behind an 18th-century brick

facade at 31 Eign Gate. A three-storey, 15th-century building with a jettied frontage, it is consistent with the surviving evidence from comparable towns and a graphic illustration that, even in Hereford, with a substantial 19th- and 20th-century component to the built environment (see Plate 3), unrecorded historic fabric is indeed present and requires vigilance before and during repairs and redevelopment.

Internal planning after 1500

Pool Farm (Building 8) appears to be the latest surviving open hall in Hereford. After it, there is a chronological gap of, perhaps, 50 years or so (it is difficult to be precise in the absence of dendrochronology) before the next earliest case-study buildings were constructed, sometime around or after the middle of the 16th century. None of these was provided with an open hall. Instead, a new pattern emerges: in new buildings, two superimposed larger or higher-status heated rooms were provided in place of an open hall. In old buildings, the hall was floored over to achieve the same result.

This is, of course, a manifestation of the phenomenon, or the collection of related phenomena, that used to be conveniently referred to by the portmanteau term 'the Great Rebuilding': the disappearance of the open hall, the appearance of more upper storeys, and the provision of chimney stacks. To some extent, the apparent suddenness of these features in Hereford may reflect the very limited sample under discussion: what could be a series of very protracted, inter-related but independent, processes appears as if overnight. But it may also be the case that, even with the tiny 24-building sample being reviewed here, there is a hint of a real chronology, and that the building industry in Hereford in the first half of the 16th century was indeed seriously depressed (see p. 6). Thus a new wave of rebuilding in the middle to later part of the century saw new styles in use by the carpenters and different demands from their clients. This was the case in Shrewsbury, where dendrochronological dating, good fabric survival, and excellent documentation combine to show the collapse of the town's economy and its property market in the late 1460s and their refusal to revive until the 1560s, by which time house design had moved on substantially. Significantly, just about the only new build commenced there in the middle of this lengthy depression was a high-status public building, a new hall built for the Council of the Welsh Marches in 1501, and this was provided with a ceiled hall with a great chamber above it. If the local economy had been more buoyant, it is probable that more surviving domestic buildings would exhibit a gradual adoption of such arrangements from earlier in the

century; but as it is, the changes appear revolutionary – and appeared so to a returned former inhabitant in the 1580s who spoke of the contemporary redevelopment of the town as the 'world made new' (Baker 2010b, 192–4; Moran 2003 241–2).

In Hereford, large, principal, heated rooms on two levels can be identified in a number of new buildings, most spectacularly in the former Conservative Club on East Street (Building 19). This two-bay timber-framed rear wing (the frontage was replaced in the 18th century) was built around the middle of the 16th century with one huge room on each floor level: a principal ground-floor room with richly moulded ceiling beams, and another room of equal size above it. This may at first have been open to the roof, but within a century the roof had been rebuilt, an attic floor installed, and the ceiling of the new first-floor room decorated with the most exuberant plasterwork; a fireplace of commensurate splendour was also provided. The building was probably originally built for John Vicaries, a wealthy brewer; his will of 1589 itemises fixtures, furniture and working equipment, but leaves no clue as to where or in which rooms they were in, nor what the rooms might have been called – though they were probably the hall and great chamber or parlour.

About the time John Vicaries' son, or the next occupant, was adding the fine plaster ceiling to the great first-floor chamber in East Street, the Church family (dyers and city office-holders) were having a new house built in Widemarsh Street – similarly provided with very large rooms at ground-and first-floor level (Building 18). The impression of relative plainness in these rooms, certainly compared to those in the former Conservative Club, at least as they appear today, is only partly offset by the restrained extravagance of the pendants to the gables and jetties on the street elevation. The lease of 1762 listed the rooms of Thomas Church's house as an 'entry, hall, kitchen, parlour and a shop', and the two large rooms can probably be identified as the hall and parlour.

Large, superimposed, heated rooms, often with distinctively elaborate ceilings, can be recognised in many other buildings out of the 24, either as new builds or as conversions of open halls. The arrangement is best preserved and clearest in the Old House of 1621 (Building 17), with two-bay, heated, principal rooms and single-bay chambers on each main floor. At 50a St Owen Street (Building 13), the larger two-bay rooms of the later 16th century building are flanked by single-bay chambers, again on both levels. At 25 Commercial Street (Building 12), a ceiled hall of the later 16th century survives with an elaborate three-by-five-panel coffered timber

ceiling. An elaborate coffered timber ceiling was also a feature of the ground floor of the surviving mid-16th-century rear range of 18 High Town (Building 23), probably built for Richard Bromwich, a mayor, from a family that provided several in this period.

Conversions – the introduction of a first-floor frame across a medieval open hall – are apparent at Pool Farm, 50a Commercial Street and 29 Castle Street (Buildings 8, 7 and 5). At Pool Farm this probably took place in the late 16th century. At 50a Commercial Street the hall had probably been converted by the time of the inventory taken in 1567. This refers to the hall, with a large table, wainscot benches and trestles, the 'ceiling of wainscot' and hangings, and a cupboard with two locks. The ceiling of wainscot in the hall may refer to a panelled ceiling, or to wall panelling. But this inventory is certainly one of an up-to-date early modern house, not a crumbling medieval one: heated, with a profusion of chambers (great chamber, chimney chamber, middle chamber, stair chamber, chamber by the court, a chamber over the larder house), a great and little parlour, and many service rooms. On the ground floor it is also interesting that the hall contained a 'large table' (with forms and trestles) but that the 'great table' was in the great parlour: the social heart of the complex had, it seems, already shifted from the hall.

At 29 Castle Street, the hall was floored over and a stack built in the former cross-passage, again probably in the 16th century. About a century later, an inventory of 1685 lists sixteen rooms – service rooms with chambers over grouped around an inner courtyard, rooms on the street frontage, and a little parlour and closet, inner hall, hall, study over the great parlour and closet, gallery, best chamber and closet, a room over the great parlour, a closet, and at least two cellars. The first-floor rooms not around the court were probably the study over the great parlour, the best chamber, the room over the best parlour, and the room over the study. The inner hall, little parlour, kitchen, and kitchen chamber had hearths and there was a 'Landskip' over the parlour hearth and a picture over the chimney piece in the kitchen chamber.

Changing fashions in living arrangements in the 16th century meant that the grand open hall which had formed the main living space in many houses ceased to be used as such. At 20 Church Street (Building 3), where there was no need to floor-over the hall, Robert Crowley called his first-floor hall the parlour, while the lower room was termed the hall – but even so was scantily furnished. It must be remembered, however, that this inventory, probably taken in 1566/7 when Crowley was on the verge of moving out in a hurry, only

includes his own goods.

Comparison with Worcester, where 16th- and 17th-century probate inventories have been studied in depth, suggests that in most houses the role of the hall, whatever it was actually called, was changing. In a house with a kitchen it became a parlour in all but name, while, if there was a parlour but no kitchen, the hall became the kitchen (see Hughes and Leech 2011, 46–8). In Hereford, at The Grapes (Building 15) in 1689 Francis Trapp the pewterer still had a hall with fitted table, forms, settle and spits, but no kitchen. Richard Andrews, farmer and clothier at 10–11 High Town (Building 22) in 1685 had two parlours and a kitchen, but his hall, identified only because of a chamber over it, had no furnishings. The hall at the rear of Sarah Seaborne's house at 41a Bridge Street (Building 6) may have been literally overshadowed by the construction of a jettied wing extending back from the frontage in the 16th century, but it survived until 1714; it still had its fitted tables and benches but was listed along with the cellar, mealroom and coal room. The living spaces were now in the jettied wing, and cooking was done elsewhere.

What is not apparent from the Hereford evidence, or at least not that seen for this study, is the continued use of the hall, usually by now a ceiled hall, as 'symbolic or ceremonial space'. In Bristol, probate inventories of the late 16th and early 17th centuries sometimes show merchants' houses with halls (open or ceiled) decorated with maps, pictures, weapons and armour to emphasise the honour, lineage and legitimacy of its owner. The hall was to remain a cultural artefact of Bristol's merchant elite even into the 1680s (Leech 2014, 98–112).

It is known from elsewhere that beds were common in living rooms during the 16th and early 17th centuries, but were becoming less usual in the later 17th century. Since Hereford has few probate inventories for the city before the 1660s, it is hardly surprising to find that Richard Andrews in High Town (1685, Building 22) and Francis Trapp (1689) at The Grapes (Building 15) only had beds in the chambers. It is notable, however, that Robert Crowley at 20 Church Street (Building 3) had no bed (at least no bed of his own) in the parlour but beds only in his chambers. The inventory of John Hyde's furnishings at 50a Commercial Street (Building 7), also taken in the 1560s, tells the same story, with beds only in the chambers.

Additional storeys and additional chambers from the mid-16th century onwards meant that new access arrangements were required. Stair towers were a feature of later 16th-century Hereford, with timber-framed examples surviving at Wyebridge House and Pool Farm

(Buildings 14 and 8), one removed later in the 17th century at 50a St Owen Street (Building 13), one recorded at the rear of 26 High Town in 1706, and a probable example at the former Conservative Club (Buildings 9 and 19). The proliferation of stair towers too was a widespread trend and can be recognised in towns as near as Shrewsbury (Baker 2010b, 184) and as far as Paris (Bechu and Fournie 2012). Within buildings, rooms that had once been interconnected were often, by the end of the 17th century, reached via a corridor.

Lofts, floored attics and dormer gables to light spaces at attic level were all new features of city buildings from the early 17th century, and must have irrevocably changed the city skyline. The Old House of 1621 (Building 17) has attics in the dormer gables and a cock-loft above; the former Farmers' Club (Building 18) around the same time was provided with floored, gable-lit attic space; the gabled attic rooms at the former Conservative Club were added to the timber frame built a generation earlier (Building 19). At 27 High Town (the King's Head, Building 9) in 1706 there were garrets over the property, though their use was not recorded, and the inn servants slept in a chamber over the landlord's accommodation at the rear.

Service rooms and service ranges are not well represented in the sample, either because they do not survive or because they are difficult to distinguish amongst the complexity of 16th- and 17th-century plans, away from the simplicity of the medieval three-part house-plan with its detached kitchen. The excavated aisled building across the yard north of the hall at 20 Church Street may possibly have been a medieval example. A possible surviving early kitchen is the end bay of the north range at Pool Farm, its smoke-blackened open roof contrasting with the storeyed accommodation in the rest of the range (Building 8). Kitchens may often have been located in rear ranges at the back of the plot. This may have been the case with another surviving late 16th-century range, at 14 Church Street (Building 11). At 26 High Town (Building 9), similarly, the kitchen was in the rearmost building down the plot, though this does not survive.

Business and industry (Fig. 4.2)

To say that there was no separation between dwelling and workplace in medieval and early modern towns would be an exaggeration: noisome trades (tanning), processes that posed a fire risk (pottery kilns) or needed lots of space (builders), were almost always separated from dwellings – though they might be right next door, like the 14th-

century probable tavern on Grope Lane, Hereford, surrounded by tanneries (Chapter 1). Nevertheless, most town-houses were multi-functional, combining domestic and commercial or business space under one roof, or within a single plot. Most urban craft production, and trade and re-distribution, and victualling, took place on a domestic scale on otherwise domestic premises. In Bristol, it was not until the very end of the 17th century that the wealthier citizens began to live away from their places of business, encouraged by regulated residential developments like Queen Square (1699–1700) and St James' Square (1705–15) (Baker, Brett and Jones 2018, chapter 7).

Perhaps the most serious defect in the sample is, as discussed already, the lack of a single recognisable shop. No medieval commercial street frontages are represented here – at least, not above ground: undercroft-level is a different matter, which makes it all the more frustrating that access was not possible to the series of known, but not well-recorded, undercrofts on the south side of High Town. The provision of doorways from an undercroft up to the street (as at 17 St Peter's Street) emphasises the frontage connection and the potential separation from the premises above. The provision of front- and back-rooms, and/or barrel-sized wall niches, strongly suggests that many were taverns and in this, the Hereford archaeological evidence is completely in accord with that from other medieval towns, large and small – Bristol and Winchelsea for example; both Chester and Winchester had taverns named 'Helle', probably because they were underground and dark (Laughton 2008, 80). It may not be stretching the archaeological evidence too far to see a wide spectrum of Herefordian drinkers represented: the fine-wine-drinking mercantile elite in the secure, stone-vaulted back cellar of the former Greyhound Inn on Eign Gate; less discriminating drinkers in the excavated building amongst the tanneries of Grope Lane, perhaps distracted by bear-baiting and the eponymous attractions of the street outside. The cellar steps that gave access to basement taverns from the street were a well-known hazard of medieval and early modern town life. Thus in 1625, Luke Hulett, owner of what was to become The Grapes (Building 15), appeared in court for 'not putting a sufficient bar or rail at the head of his tavern stairs' (the cellar may not actually have been in use as a tavern).

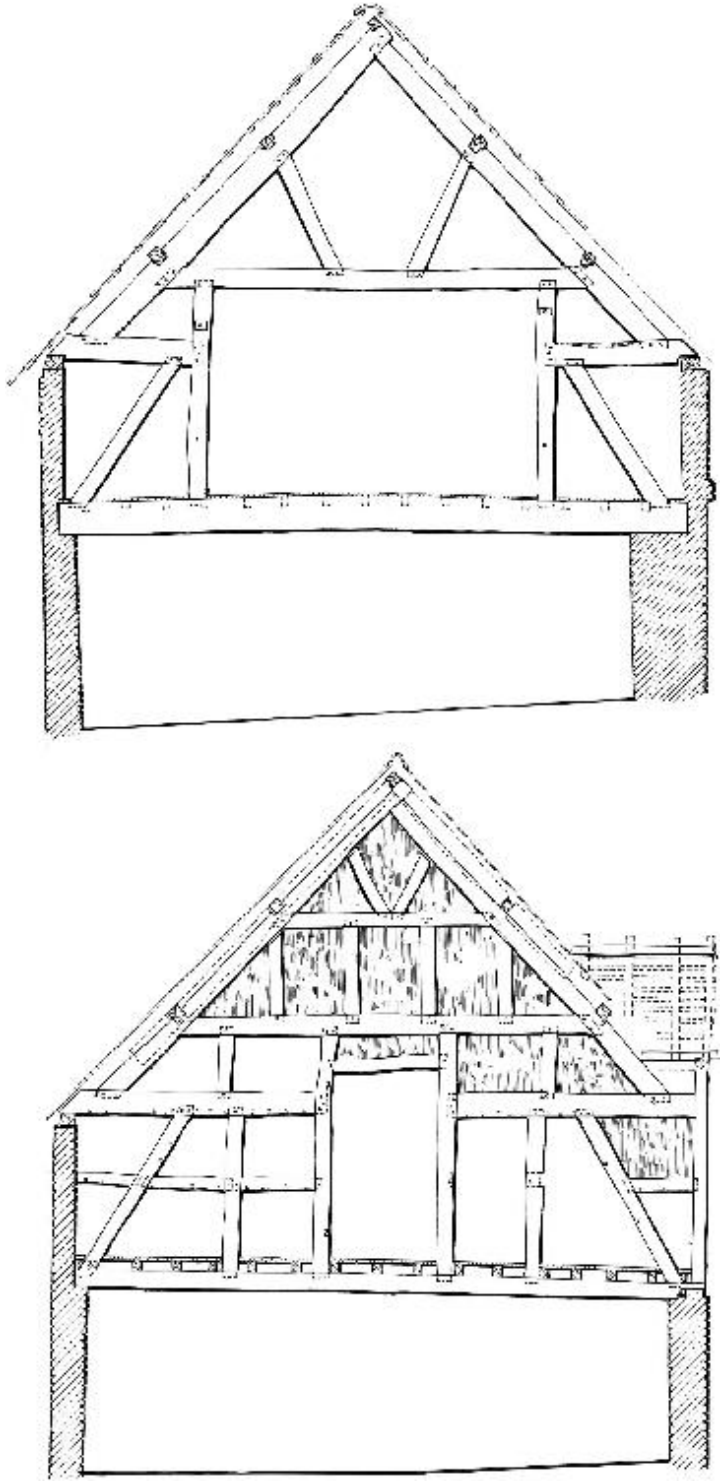


Figure 4.2 Gable elevation and cross-frame of the former Sack Warehouse on the south bank of the Wye: a good exemplar of a warehouse building with no architectural pretensions

For the period after *c*.1500, most of the case-study buildings have surviving street frontages, though not all: at the former Conservative Club, 10–11 High Town, 27 High Town, 18 High Town, 25 Commercial Street and Wyebridge House (Buildings 19, 22, 9, 23, 12, 14), only the rear ranges survive. Where the frontage ranges do survive, the framing can often be used to determine how they were partitioned, but the poor survival of original ground-floor front walls means that the presence of shops can only be determined with the help of the documentary evidence. Thus, at the Black Lion (Building 10), the two-bay, two-room, frontage block of mid- to late 16th-century date survives although there is no structural clue as to how the single-bay, front, ground-floor rooms were used. A lease of 1662 includes 'edifices, buildings, shops, cellars, sollars, rooms' and so on, though it is conceivable that 'shops' was a term aimed at legal inclusivity and not necessarily meant to be taken literally. At The Grapes (Building 15), mention in 1689 of the pewterer's 'back shop' implies that there was a front shop too; on the frontage there were two single-bay rooms, but if it were not for the historical evidence, there would be no confirmation of the use of one or both as shops. The lease of 1762 that refers back to the state of the former Farmers' Club building (18) as it was built a century before by Thomas Church II, lists an entry, a hall, a kitchen, parlour and shop. Much of the ground-floor frontage is taken up by the enormous, heated two-bay room that can most plausibly be identified as the hall; the shop may have been in the northern end-section of the house, in close association with Thomas Church's dyeing operation and the door he had inserted through the north (city) wall to allow access to the running water of the city ditch; most likely a workshop, it was not necessarily located on the street frontage. At 14 Church Street (Building 11), a shop presumably occupied the late 16th-century two-bay frontage building, but in that case the documentary evidence for room-use is lacking; at 7 St Peter's Street (Building 20) the ground-floor frontage almost certainly functioned as a shop, but no relevant structural evidence is available. Similarly at 26 High Town (Building 9), the inventory of 1706 lists James Pasey's barber shop on the frontage, which is represented structurally by a large three-bay room (repeated on the floors above); the frontage of 27, which no longer survives, was simply described as 'Mr Jones' room'.

Some buildings were sufficient grand, or had rooms that were sufficiently grand, to make a shop of any kind unlikely. No. 50a St Owen Street (Building 13), of the later 16th century and described in

a near-contemporary document as a capital messuage, was disposed along the street with a large two-bay central room flanked by two smaller single-bay rooms; how they were used or how they were known is not recorded but the status of the property as well as its marginal situation makes it less likely that a shop was part of its original design. Similarly, at the Mansion House (Building 24) in Widemarsh Street, bought by William Brewster the physician, a large central room, probably the hall, appears on the probate inventory of 1715; either side were smaller rooms but while one may have been used as a consulting room, it is unlikely ever to have been a 'shop' – at least until the brutal conversion of the ground floor in the early 20th century. The most likely of the 17th-century buildings to have made provision for a shop would – one might think – be the Old House, built for a prosperous butcher in 1621. But here, the front door from High Town leads directly into the larger of the two ground-floor rooms, heated, with an elaborate six-panel timber ceiling and very obviously a hall: a space bearing no resemblance whatsoever to the small, simple, late medieval butchers' shops with their timber-arched shop-fronts that survive in Butchers' Row, Shrewsbury.

In perhaps two instances there is a good match between the structural evidence and the historical evidence for the presence of a particular trade or occupation. The Grapes (Building 15) is probably the best example of an early modern building in Hereford with the accommodation for a craft-production process still in place. It was a pewterer's premises, Francis Trapp's probate inventory of 1689 listing the back shop with its own chimney and three old furnaces. The rear range is still there, with a large and unusually placed stack in its own half-bay, and a very low ground floor.

While pewter vessel manufacture may have been an uncommon trade in early modern Hereford, the marketing and redistribution of basic agricultural products was undoubtedly common – but is nevertheless not well represented in the historic building stock. The timber-framed rear range at 10–11 High Town (Building 22) was found to be a purpose-built, three-bay, three-storey warehouse with loading doors on each level facing into the yard, built in the late 17th century for Richard Andrews, clothworker and farmer, probably for the storage of baled cloth and fleeces. His probate inventory records his press 'for clothworkes' in his court, and shears, scales and other equipment in his shop. The range was converted to residential use in the early 18th century, with added partitions, a stack, stairs, windows and brick infill in the timber-frame panels.

Another 17th-century warehouse survives in Hereford and was

examined in the original 1996 *Secular Buildings* draft volume. This is the so-called Sack Warehouse in Wye Street, in the St Martin's suburb south of the river; this is an L-plan timber-framed building, once larger, of the mid-17th century, its roof raised in the 18th. Large open spaces on each of the two low storeys show that it was a warehouse, and its proximity to the river suggests that it was used to store goods prior or subsequent to shipping. Its form, in comparison to the warehouse range at 10–11 High Town, is low and expansive, strongly suggestive of land-values being lower in the riverside suburb than in the congested plots of High Town. Such survivals are clearly quite rare in Hereford – and in other towns in the region. The Sack Warehouse ranges stand comparison with the late 16th-century rear ranges of the Fellmongers' Hall premises in the Frankwell suburb of Shrewsbury, another riverside courtyard complex; all, however, are absolutely dwarfed by the surviving four-storey timber-framed brewery and warehouse buildings of Rowley's House in central Shrewsbury, dating from the end of the 16th century (Moran 2003, 256–8).

Brewing was an occupation that was certainly pursued in one of the 24 case-study buildings – the former Conservative Club (Building 19) – but is another instance where the structural evidence has disappeared, at least above ground, and the historical evidence is all there is. There, and elsewhere, this is probably because some trades were (like kitchens) accommodated in rear ranges that were particularly subject to later rebuilding and extension. There was, for example, a malting kiln at the rear of Wyebridge House (Building 14): the 1678 inventory for the property shows that malting was taking place and the kiln itself survived into the 19th century. A few doors up the road at the Black Lion (Building 10), while there is no documentary evidence of malting, a gap in the framing of the central range (behind the frontage) suggests the presence of a very large stack, possibly part of a kiln. At the consumers' end of the process, the 1706 inventory of 26–27 High Town, the King's Head (Building 9), reveals that the buildings that survive today do not include the landlord's accommodation at the rear, or the stables, or the back kitchen used for brewing – or the 'hall' with its tables, glassware and bar. We might guess from the furnishing of the hall, from a charge of unlawful gambling at the back door, and from the fight there in the 1680s, that here was a late 17th-century 'superpub'.

Heating

The only primary stack to survive among the pre-1500 buildings is that serving the first-floor hall of 20 Church Street (Building 3): the

stack, centrally placed on one long wall, is primary to the framing and certainly original, although the fireplace itself has been remodelled; it was presumably also the site of the iron stove recorded in the mid-16th century. How the medieval open hall at Harley Court (Building 4) was heated is uncertain though, again, there could have been a wall fireplace where a later one now stands; at Pool Farm (Building 8) there is no smoke-blackening in the roof of the hall, and that too may have had a wall stack. There is structural evidence for central hearths in the form of smoke louvres in the roofs at 29 Castle Street and 50a Commercial Street (Buildings 5 and 7). In the former, extra purlins serve as trimmers at the bottom of the opening; at the latter, additional purlins and a gap in the ridge-piece tell the same story.

By the post-medieval period the fireplace had become ubiquitous and the open hearth redundant. Most stacks seem to be of masonry rather than brick, though brick does begin to emerge in surviving buildings in the later 17th century and may have been used for the lining of fireplaces and chimneys beforehand (p. 12). Most fireplaces were placed roughly central to the rooms they served and many were set into either side of stacks built as part of the partitions between rooms. Surprisingly, there are some fireplaces set in what appear to be odd positions, and for no apparently obvious reason. The stacks in the north wall of the larger southern rooms of the former Farmers' Club (Building 18) on Widemarsh Street are set well to the west of centre and, more bizarrely, the fireplaces in the high-status rooms of Wyebridge House (Building 14) are set close to the western end of their northern walls and right by the doorways through the cross-frames.

Timber framing before 1500

No timber buildings at all survive from the first three or four centuries of the existence of Hereford as a town: the only evidence is from archaeological excavation. This shows that the earliest type of structure – a timber building reliant on the load-bearing capacity and rigidity of earth-fast posts set in post-holes – began to be superseded in the 10th to 12th centuries by more complex, partially self-supporting, structures based on horizontal sill beams, represented in the archaeological evidence by earth-cut linear slots. In one suburban building in the late 12th century (in Harrison Street, off the outer end of St Owen Street), the two systems were mixed, with lengths of sill interrupted by post-holes. And then, the excavated evidence reveals a widespread general transition to foundations consisting of stone

ground-walls or plinths that must have carried properly braced, fully triangulated, timber frames; such masonry footings were relatively damp-proof and the superstructures they carried could therefore potentially survive for very long periods.

This transition is universal in English medieval towns, commencing in the later 12th century, and has been characterised as the change from 'treewrighting', in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, to 'carpentry'. The former was distinguished by an emphasis on axe-cut joints, split (rather than sawn) timbers, lack of prefabrication and a reliance on earth-fast footings to give extra stability; stave-construction, with vertical planks or boards lodged between grooved timbers, was part of this repertoire (Goodburn 2015). In Hereford, the archaeological evidence for the transition places it in the mid- to late 13th century. The excavated evidence comes, however, from the more marginal intramural streets (Gaol Street/Grope Lane and Bewell Street) and it is reasonable to suppose that fully triangulated timber frames were being erected in High Town somewhat before that, perhaps in the late 12th century, though none survive there until much later.

Surviving timber framing from before the Black Death is extremely rare in England, and Hereford is unusual and fortunate in having three examples, from the late 12th, mid-13th and early 14th centuries. The hall of the Bishop's Palace (Building 1) illustrates what carpenters could do for their very wealthiest clients at the end of the 12th century, and the techniques they used – face-pegging, halving, half-laps and nailed-on *appliqué* decoration – were probably at the leading edge of contemporary carpentry techniques, but they were quite different from those that would become ubiquitous in the later medieval period and would not have been unfamiliar to a Saxon 'treewright', or the builders of the timber hall of *c.*900 excavated to the south of the Cathedral Lady Chapel (Boucher, Craddock-Bennett and Daly 2015, 31–6). The Cathedral Barn (Building 2), built in the middle of the following century, may be a building of vastly different status and use, but is nevertheless recognisably a relative: it is also an aisled building, with aisle plates set horizontally, a common-rafter roof with passing braces, notched half-lap joints, and splayed-and-tabled scarf joints in the wall-plates. Although it had been moved from its original site, as built it would have had solid, continuous footings. Built in the 1320s, 20 Church Street (Building 3) is one of the earliest timber-framed domestic hall-houses surviving anywhere in the region, the nearest analogues – three timber-framed halls in Shrewsbury (Bear Steps, 12a Fish Street and the Old Mansion) – all dating from later in the 14th century, after the Black Death. It shows a range of fully

developed structural features and in many ways presages the form of timber framing that survives rather more commonly from the years after 1400. Some of the decorative features applied abundantly later are present here, but their application is restrained: trefoil-headed windows, and particularly the ogee-headed doorways and cusped wind braces.

Excluding the Cathedral Barn, most of the medieval framing is box-framing with varieties of square panelling, the panels being typically quite large and the stave supports for the wattle-and-daub infills quite substantial and almost structural. These can be seen, for example, at 20 Church Street. The most dramatic use of large infill panels occurs in the extraordinary design of the side wall of the former cross wing at 41a Bridge Street (Building 6), which consists structurally of nothing more than large raking braces between the bay posts with no subsidiary studs or rails; the design is unknown elsewhere in the city and it is difficult to find a parallel for it in the Welsh Marches at all.

While most of the framing is of square panelling, close-studding is known to have been used in the city towards the end of the medieval period. It was not a structural necessity – it was a display of wealth, the lavish use of timber implying that money was no object in a new building. Fragments of close-studding survive on the gable end of one of the rear ranges of 25 Commercial Street, probably of *c.*1500, and is present at Pool Farm in the walls of the cross-passage (Buildings 12, 8). The largest-scale use of this technique is to be found in the cloister walk of the College of the Vicars' Choral, built to the south-east of the cathedral in the 1470s.

Timber framing after 1500 (Fig. 4.3, 4.4)

Hereford seems, from both the evidence of historic illustrations and its surviving post-medieval buildings, still to have been a largely timber-framed town at the start of the 18th century. But it was clearly not a town with flamboyantly decorative timber framing to rival the likes of Ludlow or Shrewsbury further north in the Welsh Marches. In this, the county town reflects its county, for Herefordshire has no real rivals to the grand country or town houses of Shropshire or Cheshire – no Pitchford Hall or Little Moreton Hall – and few examples of the extravagant use of lozenges, quatrefoils and cusping in the framing. The fanciest domestic timber-framed facade surviving from this period in Hereford is 3 High Street, with its single-bay frontage, jetties at three levels, carved brackets with masked heads, boxed oriel five-light window with ovolo-moulded frame and quatrefoil-pattern studding: this is now marooned at first-floor level in the front of the Littlewood's

store building of the 1960s. Easily overlooked and rarely cleaned, it is better known locally as the building that was moved off its site on rollers in the 1960s, left in High Town for a while and then moved back again, than for the exemplary quality of its carpentry. The single most ornately carpentered building in the whole town was probably that which stood directly opposite: the Old Market Hall, recently found (by John Eisel) to be a construction of 1576. Although the surviving early 17th-century arcaded market halls of Ledbury and Leominster do have a degree of decoration quite unusual for the county, illustrations show that the Hereford High Town market hall was even larger and even more extravagant, before having its top floor removed in the 18th century and then being finally cleared away in the mid-19th (Fig 4.4).

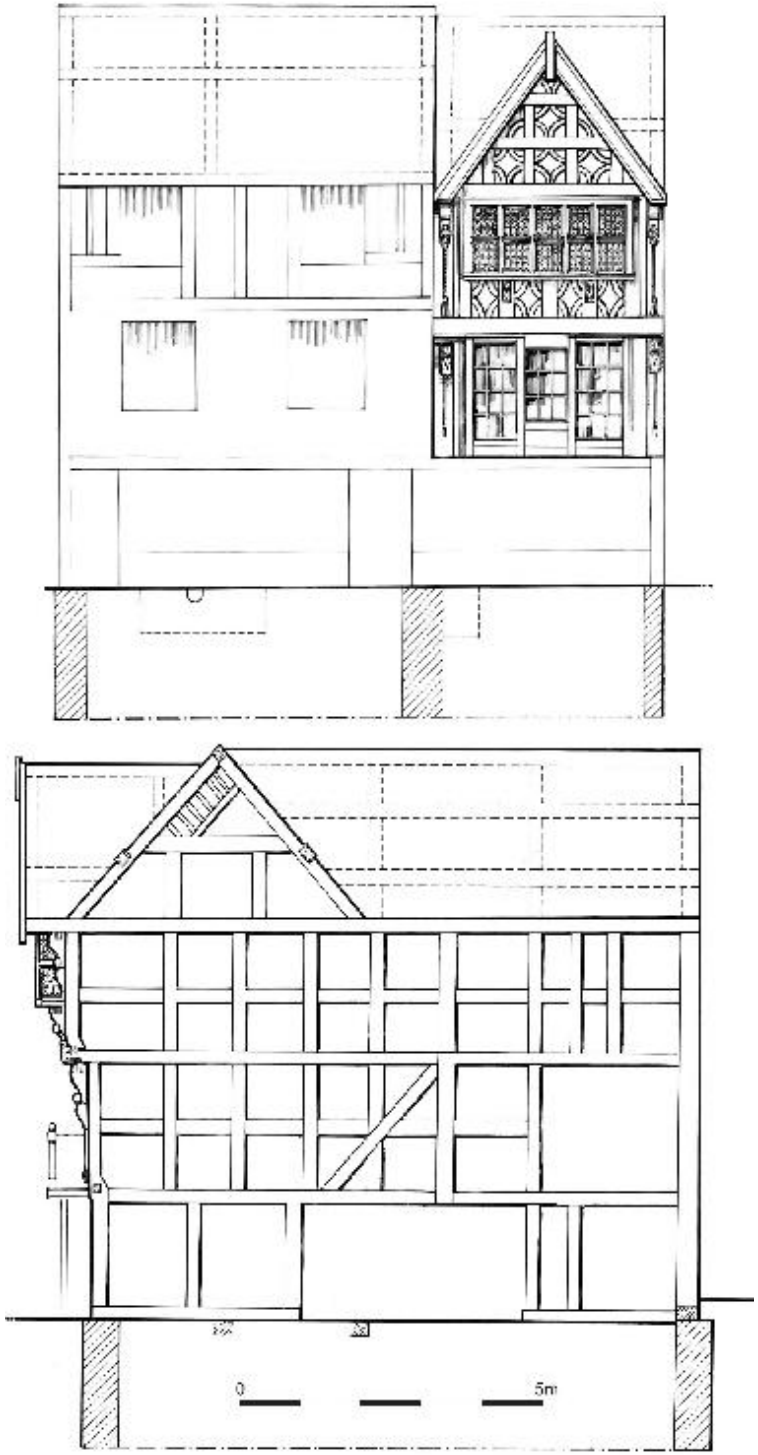


Figure 4.3 Frontage and side elevations of 3 High Street. One of the more ornate buildings of early 17th-century Hereford, it is an early example of building conservation: it was moved on rollers, lifted and then re-set at first-floor level in the Littlewood's store building

of the 1960s

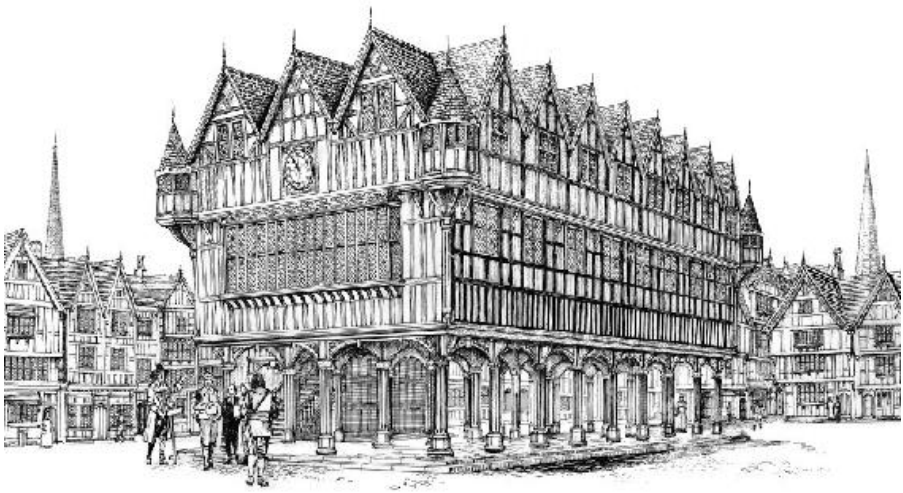


Figure 4.4 Reconstruction (by Bryan Byron) of the Old Market Hall, which stood in High Town until it was finally demolished in the 1850s. Probably built 1576, it accommodated trade guilds on the top floor, courts and magistrates' chambers on the first floor, and market traders at ground level

For the most part though, the framing of the surviving post-medieval timber buildings in the city is either of square panelling or of close-studding – the latter, typically, used on the grander and more public facades and generally with the studs interrupting mid-rails on each storey. As close-studded facades are the ones likely to be upgraded more often to keep up with architectural fashion, they are the ones less likely to survive – whilst the humbler square panelling still survives behind later brick fronts in many cases throughout the city. Good examples of close-studding survive in the Old House, at 14 Church Street, and on Wyebridge House (Buildings 17, 11 and 14).

Jetties were common features of the grander properties in the city but as many of these were, like close-studding, on principal elevations, many have been replaced by later brick faces, or under-built and hidden. As with close-studding, care was frequently taken to distinguish with a jetty an elevation that might be considered private today: the passageway/side elevations of 14 Church Street, and 18 and 26 High Town all have this feature (Buildings 11, 23 and 9), the latter two largely hidden by later alterations. Jetties could be applied at several levels: first- and second-floor jetties were extremely common; at Wyebridge House (Building 14) the ground floor too was

jettied out over the old city wall.

Panel infills were all fairly conventional. In square panelling they were based on twigs or laths woven around upright staves with their pointed heads slotted into drilled stave holes in the soffits of the rail above and chamfered feet clipped into a stave cut into the top of the rail below – the wattle then being covered with daub. In close-studding, most infills were of daub fixed to short horizontal laths with chamfered ends clipped into stave grooves in the sides of the studs.

Roofs: structures and coverings (Fig. 4.5–4.8)

The roof designs of the earlier medieval buildings offer no clues to a common type of roof: they are all quite different to each other and to what was to evolve by the later medieval period. The roof of the aisled hall of the Bishop's Palace is assumed to have been some form of coupled-rafter roof, probably trussed in some manner because of its sheer size. Similarly, the original roof of the once-aisled mid-13th-century Cathedral Barn was also probably a coupled-rafter design, and there is evidence in the tie beams of some form of scissor bracing.

A century later, the roof of 20 Church Street was of crown-post form – the only one known to survive in the city and one of very few in Herefordshire, being far more common over the border in Shropshire where nearly 30 were listed some years ago dating from *c*.1300 into the 1430s (Moran 2003, table 1). The plain gabled truss and side-purlin roof was the most common in the later medieval period in Hereford and offered the opportunity for the addition of rich decoration to the trusses and wind-braces. The basic design continued into the post-medieval period, though in a much less decorative form and, eventually, without the wind braces.

A later exception to the rule of the standard truss-and-purlin roofs is the Booth Hall on the south side of High Town in which tie-beam trusses alternate with hammer beam trusses with a high arch-braced collar. Dendrochronology puts the building in the second half of the 15th century (1454–92: Boswijk and Tyers 1997), making it one of the later open halls built in Hereford. Its hammer-beam form and the tracery panels in the trusses bear a strong resemblance to the contemporaneous roof of the Great Hall in the Commandery, Worcester; the design may have been chosen (in both cases) for its grandeur, a suitable roof for the traditional great hall of a very grand person, or public body.

Figure 4.5 The ornate 15th-century roof of the Booth Hall, off High Town. It was built for the Merchant Guild in 1454–92 and judicial functions were exercised from it; the Freemen's Prison stood to its south. Used as a tavern from the late 17th century, it was lost to sight until rediscovered in 1919

Most roofs of post-medieval buildings were based on fairly straightforward queen-strut trusses supporting trenched purlins – sometimes wind-braced. By this period the roofs were either not exposed at all or only exposed in attics and garrets where decoration was not considered necessary – so there are no examples of fine roof carpentry designed to be seen from below as there had been in the medieval period. However, some roof structures were fine examples of carpentry design, such as that over the broad former Farmers' Club building on Widemarsh Street (Building 18).

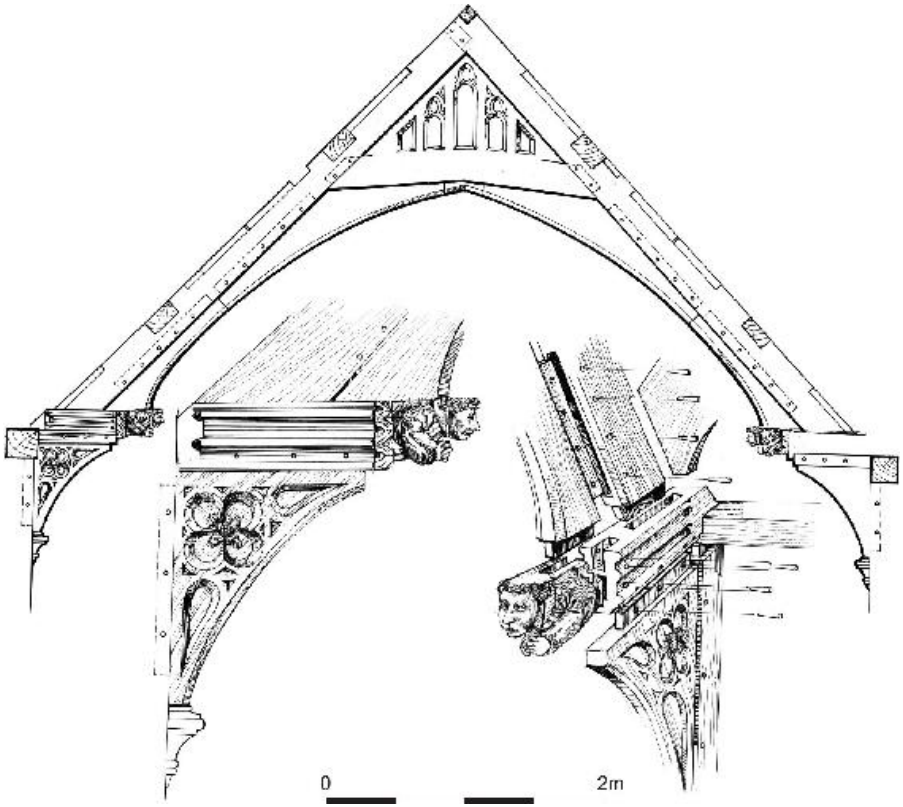


Figure 4.6 A hammer-beam truss in the roof of the Booth Hall, with reconstructions of the brace and hammer-beam detailing and assembly

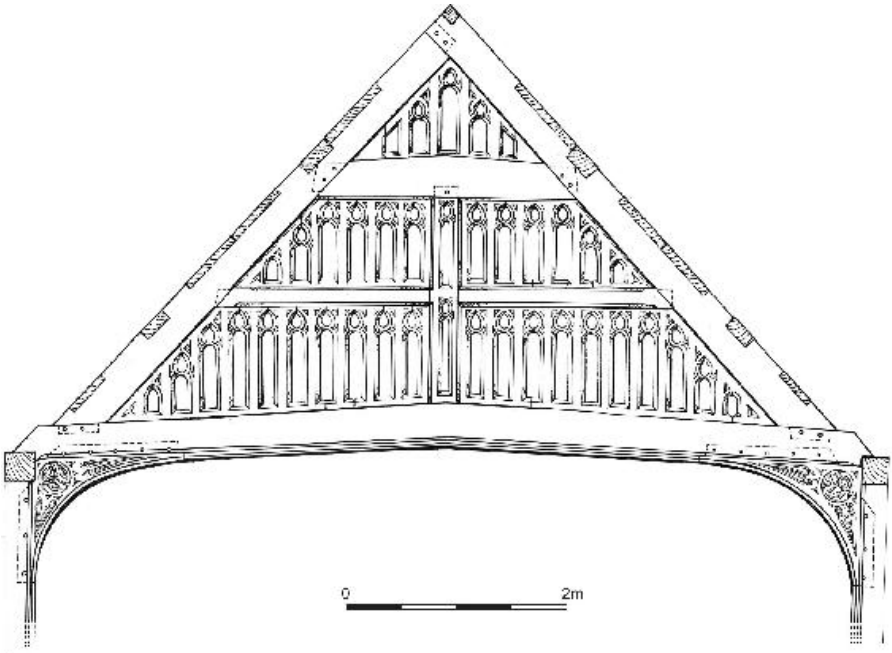


Figure 4.7 A tie-beam truss in the roof of the Booth Hall.

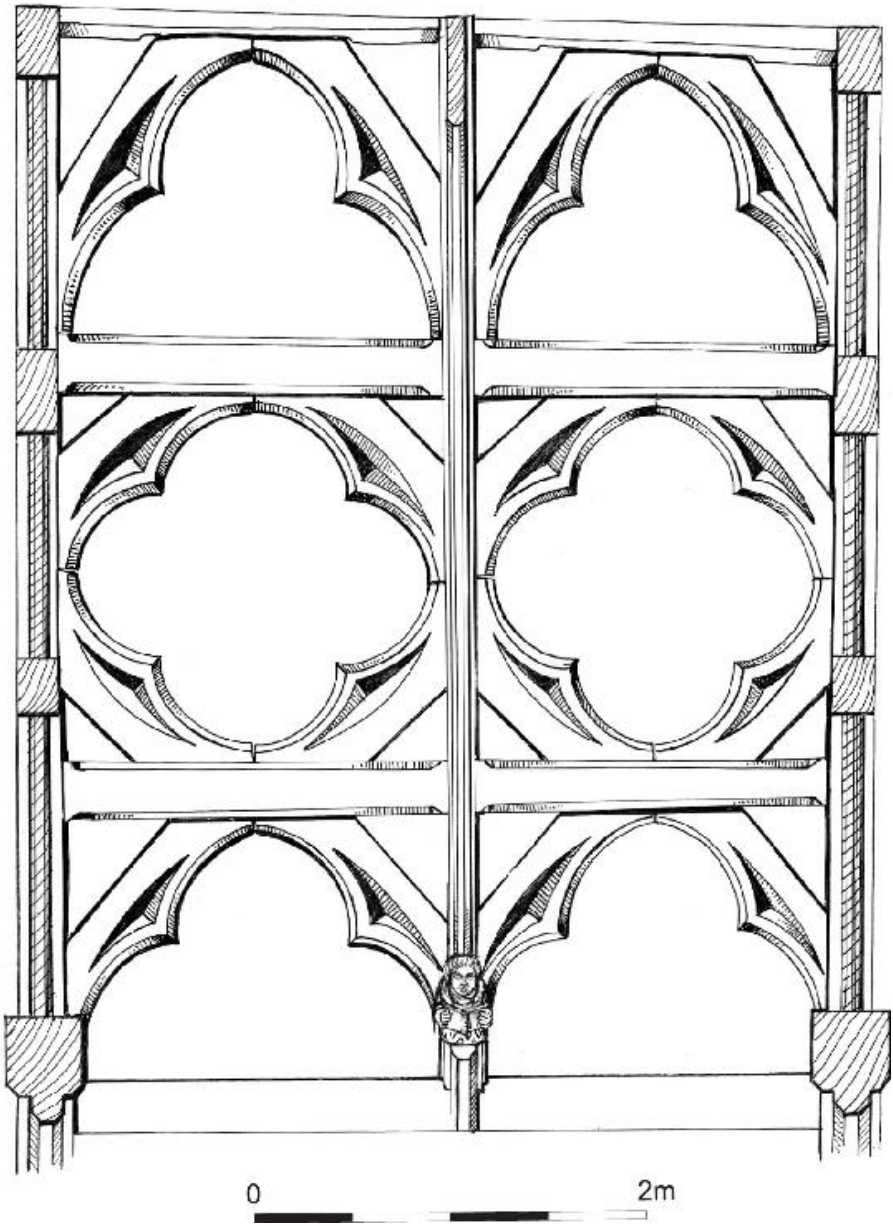


Figure 4.8 Typical cusped wind-bracing in one slope of the Booth Hall roof, partly reconstructed

There is some documentary evidence from our period for thatch being used as a roof covering for buildings in the suburbs, and in one of the rear buildings of the Black Lion on Bridge Street (Building 10). While it might be assumed that most of the buildings in the centre of the city would have been covered in stone or ceramic tiles, glazed ceramic ridge tiles only appear commonly in archaeological deposits

after *c*.1300, and flat ceramic tiles only from the 16th (p. 12). How this should be interpreted is difficult to say. A time-lag is to be expected between the employment of a roofing material and its appearance, discarded, amongst archaeological debris, and it may be that the appearance of ceramic tile fragments in 16th-century deposits is another manifestation of the modernisation of the medieval housing stock in the second half of the century. It might also be suspected that Hereford was slower to adopt inorganic roofing materials than some other medieval towns. It might then not be a complete coincidence that, so far, no tiles of medieval type have been found *in situ* on a Hereford roof. This is in contrast to Shrewsbury, where more than twenty buildings have been found with glazed, crested ridge tiles of medieval type on their roofs – though as some of the buildings are Georgian, there was evidently an active second-hand market operating (Baker 2010b, 70). Further afield, Salisbury and Winchester have substantial numbers of glazed crested ridge tiles remaining on the roofs of their domestic and institutional buildings, but other western English towns display a similar degree of survival to Hereford. In Worcester, for example, the only glazed ridge tiles to have been seen so far are on the 15th-century great hall of St Wulfstan's Hospital, the Commandery.

Floor structures

Most of the post-medieval timber-framed buildings seem to have been floored from the start rather than, like some medieval buildings, having floors added into open halls at a later date. Floor construction was generally conventional enough, usually of broad irregular deal floorboards nailed to common joists supported on bridging, girding or axial beams. The one remarkable exception was the 'horizontal close-studded' floor in the high-status rear range of 18 High Town (Building 23), with an applied coffer pattern of moulded beams hiding the design from the ground floor; why such a floor should be required is unknown.

Masonry

Masonry has made only limited appearances among the 24 buildings looked at. At 29 Castle Street (Building 5), the hall, though of domestic dimensions on a domestic plot, was built for the collegiate body, the Vicars' Choral, that occupied the site between the 1330s and 1470s, and it is this that most probably accounts for its fine stone

construction. At Canon's House, 3 St John Street, part of the frontage range has post-medieval timber framing over a stone ground floor, which could be of earlier date (Shoesmith 1998).

Masonry at basement level should not be underestimated, either as a component of the original investment in the rebuilding of the site, or architecturally. Stone undercrofts of very high quality are known from the 13th and 15th centuries; as noted before (p. 20), the superlative quality of the masonry in the undercrofts of 2–5 Widemarsh Street, and its surviving ironwork, would not be out of place in the cathedral.

But it is also the case that there is a high incidence of re-used medieval masonry in Hereford cellarage. It is a particular feature of 17 St Peter's Street where, in the medieval cellar, corbels, shafts and moulded slabs were used to create a base for a chimney stack at the junction of the front and rear ranges of the new, 16th-century, timber-framed building built above (Watkins 1930). Similarly, when the basement of The Spread Eagle, 2 King Street, was recently investigated, a fine 15th-century octagonal column reported by the Royal Commission was found to be a relatively recent insertion into a genuine medieval undercroft of possible 13th- or14th-century date, linked to no.1 King Street next door (RCHM 1931, monument no. 41). More generally, the issue of re-used masonry makes the RCHM notes on Hereford cellars unreliable in terms of the incidence of *in situ* medieval fabric. An earlier generation of writers, like Watkins, saw much of this re-used material as monastic plunder; the true balance between the remains of dissolved monasteries versus the remains of modernised hall-houses has yet to be established, though, as this section shows, secular stonework was uncommon in medieval Hereford.

Institutional buildings – almshouses – continued to be built in stone, for example Coningsby's Hospital built next to the ruins of the Blackfriars on Widemarsh Street from around 1614 and no doubt using masonry from the old friary. But in secular, domestic contexts, both before and after 1500, stone was generally used only in the plinths and chimney stacks of the timber-framed buildings.

The advent of brick

Based purely on the surviving buildings, it is as if the brick house arrived late in Hereford and almost fully formed. The late 17th-century Mansion House was a symmetrical composition with a logical and balanced internal layout no different in many ways from the standard town houses built in the next two centuries – a suitable architectural finale to the century.

It is, of course, quite certain that brick had been used before within the city – and not just for chimneys and hearths (see p. 12). The documentary evidence for the Mansion House shows that it was one of several such properties in that part of the town already completed by the 1690s, and the documents looked at in the context of 64–66 Widemarsh Street (p. 136) speak of brick houses, including Mistress Jeffries' new house, outside the city wall by the 1630s. To these may be added Price's Almshouses, out of town to the west on the Whitecross Road. This is a two-storey 'E-shaped' range of twelve dwellings dated to 1665 – but looking as if it could have been built up to half a century earlier – with ground-floor walls of ashlar and first-floor walls of hand-made red brick. The earliest documentary references to a brickmaker in Hereford, and to digging for clay on Widemarsh Common, come from the 1660s (Whitehead and Hurley 2016, 201).

Comparison with other Midland areas suggests that brick would be used for big houses in country areas much earlier than it was in town. Where clay could be dug and fired near to the construction site it was economic to build in the more durable material, but the cost of transport from more distant brick works to building site could be prohibitive unless the owner could call on free labour from his tenants. Thus, brick on a grand scale occurs in the county a generation earlier than in Hereford. Out of a handful of buildings one of the more remarkable is Kinnersley Castle, twelve miles north-west of the city, remodelled between the 1590s and the early 17th century. Brick-stepped gables were added in front of masonry ones as part of the work – purely, it seems, for decoration, and suggesting an aspiration to be fashionable. Rodd Court, near Kington, built in the 1620s, has a brick front but is otherwise of stone, whilst Hellens, an enigmatic fragment possibly incorporating even older elements, is largely of brick and of the early 17th century.

Research on accounts in Worcester shows that there the price of timber was rising in the 17th century compared with the cost of living, while the cost of brick and tile was falling. The tipping point came in the 1630s, and in that decade the chapel and almshouses of St Oswald's Hospital in the Tything were largely rebuilt in brick. In 1646/7 a house in Angel Street was also built in brick. This did not mean that timber building ceased there. Many factors such as personal preference, availability of materials, transport costs and financial status have to be taken into account (Hughes 1990, 117). In Hereford, brick clay seems not to have been as readily available as in Worcester where there were large deposits east of the Tything and Foregate

Street and where coal for firing came down the river.

In Herefordshire, both the county and the city were fairly conservative in their adherence to timber-framing – which continued to be a reasonably high-status building material well into the second half of the 17th century. In the countryside and smaller market towns, large houses were still being built, or added to, in timber-framing long after the Restoration – such as a new wing at Hergest Court, near Kington, or Bible House, in Bromyard, built as late as 1685. And, as at 25 Commercial Street (Building 12), where it was going to be invisible and not put the householder (or builder) to shame, it could be used late into the 18th century. But, as we have seen, there *were* several brick buildings within the city in the 17th century long before the Mansion House was built. Why, apparently, only that one survives, is not at all clear: very few would presumably have met the same fate as Mistress Jeffries' brick 'new house', built just outside the city gate on Widemarsh Street – and promptly demolished prior to the siege of 1645.

Internal decoration and furnishing (Fig. 4.9)

Before 1500, most of the internal decoration that survives is limited to moulded and shaped timbers. The use, at the Bishop's Palace, of both carved 'in the wood' decoration and appliqué decorative sections – including, aptly, nailed-on nail-head ornament to the arcade arches – is of considerable interest. Appliqué decoration does not reappear after this to any great extent until the early 17th century when it was used for window surrounds and brackets.

There are examples of cusped structural timbers creating part of an overall wall design: as on the tops of the walls at 50a Commercial Street and the surviving part of 41a Bridge Street. By far the most extravagant decoration was reserved for the roofs of the open halls, where both trusses and wind-braces were extensively cusped and moulded, with often surprisingly intricate carving. Carpenters frequently looked to masons for inspiration – as the fine, unweathered, trefoiled tracery of the timber windows in the hall of 20 Church Street attests.

Figure 4.9 The richly decorated early 17th-century plaster ceiling of the upper floor of the Mayor's Parlour, 24 Church Street

Documentary evidence for medieval decoration and furnishings in a middle-class domestic setting is scanty, to say the least, and often dependent on much later documents which may reflect a later way of life. It does, however, shed some light on a little-known subject. In perhaps the earliest evidence we have for furnishings, John Viall, one of the cathedral canons at Harley Court (Building 4), left in his will of November 1526, one bed with a tapestry coverlet ('a coverynge after Carpet makinge'), and to Master William Edwards, who was to have the house after him 'all my hanging of my house'. It looks as though these hangings were made to fit the house so it made sense for his successor to inherit them.[1] At 29 Castle Street (Building 5), a list of fixtures made when it was rented in 1713 suggests that the medieval benches round the hall were still in place.[2]

After 1500 and up to *c*.1700, most surviving internal decoration takes the form of plasterwork, sometimes original to the building, sometimes added. Most of this is fairly naïve, perhaps provincial or even rustic, but enthusiastic. The decorative plasterwork in the Black Lion (Building 10) – including arguably one of the best early 17th-century pieces in the arcaded overmantle of the 'Commandment Room' on the first floor – was complemented by the fine and almost unique surviving wall paintings of the Ten Commandments that give the room its present name.

Amongst the finest plasterwork in the city is that in one of the first-floor chambers of 24–25 Church Street – a building, also known as the Mayor's Parlour, examined briefly in the draft 1996 *Secular Buildings* volume. This is a two-bay, two-storey, double-pile timber-framed building, at right-angles to the street, with a first-floor chamber open to the roof in each pile. In the southern pile (the southern half of 24-25 Church Street) the arch-braced collars of the open roof are hidden by the most elaborate plasterwork. The decoration probably dates from the rebuilding of the house prior to 1627 by James Lawrence, who leased the property from the Vicars' Choral. This is probably the James Lawrence who was Mayor of Hereford at the time; he was also a J.P. and may have adapted the building as an office in which to conduct his legal affairs. In 1628, one Isaake Clarke appeared before two other magistrates on a charge of being drunk and using abusive and blasphemous language to James Lawrence in the Register's Office in Cabbage Lane (Church Street) (Hughes, in Morriss and Hughes 1996).

There is a surprising lack of surviving high-quality woodwork in the city after 1500 – with no really grand 16th- or 17th-century staircases or elaborately wainscoted rooms, although contemporary inventories show that they were a feature of the wealthier houses in Hereford.

When John Hyde leased 50a Commercial Street (Building 7) to Richard Seaborne in 1567, a list was made of the furnishings which were part of the lease: this was necessary because the heavy beds, tables, panelling and glass were regarded as fixtures but, like carpets and fitted kitchens to-day, could, in theory, be removed by unscrupulous tenants. The list included bedsteads with testers in the five chambers, and tables with frames or trestles and built-in forms in the hall, and in the little and great parlours. It may be significant that there were no tables in the chambers, suggesting that the parlours and hall were on the ground floor where the table supports would be dug into the flooring. There were hangings in all the chambers, and in the great chamber hangings of 'newe worke', while the hall and little parlour had both hangings and wainscot. There is no indication as to whether these hangings were of tapestry or the ubiquitous painted cloths of the time. The faint traces of painted plaster still visible in the upper part of the hall may have covered the parts the hangings did not reach, or they may be later decoration. Evidence from elsewhere suggests that such a large amount of panelling was unusual at this date and indicative of a high-status dwelling. The final line of the inventory refers to the glass and lattice of the 'hole howse'.

By the end of the 17th century, interior decoration was becoming more sophisticated, plasterwork more restrained, and colour coordination more important. At 24–25 Commercial Street, John Rawlings had a blue room, a green room and a red room in his house when he died. A green room features in Richard Andrews' inventory at 10–11 High Town (Building 22), and at 26–27 High Town (Building 9), the room-names of the King's Head – the Flower de Luce, the Mitre, the Sun, the Rose, the Half Moon and so on – presumably reflected the distinctive decorative schemes to be seen in each.

Twenty-four buildings: the social sample

It is a measure of the success of the historical research behind this volume that in about eighteen of the 24 case-study buildings an original owner/builder can be identified by name, or as a type of person (a canon, for example) – or something is known of their immediate successors in the house that reveals how the status of the house was understood contemporaneously. In short, the social context of three-quarters of our sample is recoverable, roughly or in detail.

It is no accident that the earliest surviving building was built for Hereford's most notable figure – the Bishop. This was most probably Bishop William de Vere, who spent some of his youth at the court of Henry I and his early career in the household of the Archbishop of Canterbury; his brother was the Earl of Oxford. Later he was made one of the King's Justices. The Great Hall he commissioned would not have been out of place – in fact would have been thought bang-up-to-date – at the Angevin Court.

Canonical residences loom large in this volume – but who, or what sort of people, were the canons? They have been described as 'the elite of the medieval church'. 'Able and established clerics, they were highly educated with successful careers in the service of the church or crown by the time they became canons. Possession of a canonry was a highly desirable reward and mark of status, much sought after by ambitious clerks' (Swanson and Lepine 2000, 54–5). Amongst their earliest recorded members are luminaries such as Walter Map and Gerald of Wales – sadly, pre-dating any of the buildings looked at here. We have few personal details for the occupants of our sample houses, and most of these are of 16th-century date or later. John Viall, the canon who lived in Harley Court (Building 4) from 1515, left a will in which he bequeathed various vestments and land in the county, including 'the vineyard', to his fellow clerics and more vestments to the church at Colwall where he probably held the living.[3]

For the open hall at 50a Commercial Street (Building 7), the fine

carpentry of whose roof has much in common with that of the later canonical halls and 41a Bridge Street (Building 6), we have no name to associate with the property before the middle of the 16th century, when it was part of the capital messuage of John Hyde Esq. The extensive premises listed in the indenture of 1567 leaves no doubt that this was a very wealthy, recently modernised property.

After 1500, at least three buildings were associated with the office-holding stratum of urban society – in other words, its wealthiest and often old-established members. The Bromwich family, at 18 High Town and 27 High Town (Buildings 23 and 9), provided several mayors for the city in the late medieval and early modern periods. Thomas Church II, builder of the former Farmers' Club (Building 18), was a dyer, city councillor and mayor in 1636. The former Conservative Club (Building 19) on East Street was of similar size to Thomas Church's house, if the lost frontage range is taken into account. The original 16th-century timber-framed rear wing was part of the house built for John Vicaries, a wealthy brewer, and it may have been his son, also a brewer, who was responsible for the major renovation and spectacular plaster ceiling, around the time Thomas Church II was building on Widemarsh Street. The splendour of the Great Chamber and its plaster ceiling seem strangely out-of-place in terms of what is understood of its neighbourhood at the time – a back lane, known for dung-heaps and pub fights (see Building 9 and below). John Vicaries and his son were successful and wealthy entrepreneurs who were nevertheless outside the oligarchic office-holding inner-circle. If the surviving Great Chamber with its over-the-top ceiling is at all representative of the remainder of the house that has been lost, it must have been a truly exuberant building, a sure distraction from the unsympathetic surroundings and a sign of its owners' escape from them.

Other buildings described here have wealthy associations that may be largely external to the town and its affairs. Wyebridge House (Building 14) was on a plot owned by a Bodenham and tenanted by a Scudamore. Between 1586 and 1616 it was turned into a 'mansion house' (of which the present building formed part) by William Woolridge, gent. The timber-framed house stretching along the frontage at 50a St Owen Street (Building 13) was developed in the late 16th century by John Darnell of Hereford, gentleman, on a plot that had been the capital messuage of a gentleman's widow. Possibly the sort of associations seen in these two properties were characteristic of main streets away from the commercial core, but nevertheless within the walls, and of the City. This is a socio-economic geography not

unlike today's, in which Bridge Street and St Owen Street are dominated not by retail outlets but by particular professional land uses (solicitors/estate agents and medical practices respectively) that are not heavily dependent on footfall as a locational factor, and derive status, and signal stability and legitimacy, from traditional – usually Georgian – town-house architecture.

With the Old House (Building 17), we are seeing a construction project of 1621 whose craftsmanship was as fine and expensive as the buildings just discussed, but was applied to a much smaller house, on a small plot, belonging to a man who was wealthy but a member of a social group who were not generally represented amongst the office-holders in the civic body. The carpenter's client in this case was John Jones the butcher: one of no fewer than three John Jones, who may have been related – and all characters of some notoriety. John Jones, butcher, appeared in court accused of dishonesty, while his wife was indicted as a drunkard and common scold. The John Jones who seems to have been instrumental in extending the King's Head (26–27 High Town, Building 9) was also in trouble with the authorities for allowing unlawful games at the inn and for fights on the premises. Yet another John Jones moved his carrier's business from Packer's Lane out to the north end of Widemarsh Street, where he built the Essex Arms *c*.1650 (Building 16). His servant was accused of refusing to pay for the cart wheels he had ordered. More seriously, his wife Katherine was, it was alleged, party to a theft of jewels from her husband's London-bound cart and knew where they had been pawned.

And it is in John Jones, carrier of Widemarsh Street, our mid-17th-century white-van man, that we meet the least wealthy, least influential, identifiable owner-builder of the group, associated with a two-up, two-down timber-framed building in a damp, smelly, flood-prone outer suburb. It was nevertheless a robust, competent timber-frame that withstood three centuries of alteration on site before dismantling and re-erection in a country park. In a sense it is the most important building of the group, because it is representative of a much larger section of the population than that living in canonical halls, mansions and capital messuages. It is a type of building, a scale of accommodation, that may well have been widespread in the suburbs and the more marginal streets within the walls, but has suffered disproportionate losses through extension and replacement. It is a type still commonly seen in many early modern suburban contexts elsewhere (Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury; the Tything, Worcester, for example), and in the countryside. And it is important because, in this instance, the historical evidence can provide a precise association with

an individual whose occupation is known and whose brushes with the law add detail and colour to the monochrome record of a name on a conveyance.

Building 21, 64–66 Widemarsh Street, much closer to the city, offers a similar level of accommodation to the Essex Arms, though not very well executed, using second-hand materials. Having begun life after the Civil War as a two-up, two-down in single ownership, it was partitioned into two, probably in the early 19th century – and it is with that development that we reach (in the absence of a terrace row building or an almshouse) the most basic identifiable level of accommodation represented in this study.

The poor do not commission buildings: they leave only fugitive traces in the built environment. But the poor do rent old buildings, parts of buildings, and rooms in old buildings, and they are undoubtedly present – but invisible – in many of the houses in this volume. They could be made visible and returned to their dwellings through research on (for example) 19th-century census returns; that, however, is work for the future.

Notes

1 TNA PROB 11/22/179
2 HRO K11/3796
3 TNA PROB 11/22/179

Selective glossary

Aisled Hall: a type of open hall in which a central section is flanked by parallel spaces to either side, separated by timber or stone arcades – similar to a church nave with aisles

Arcade: a row of posts or columns supporting masonry or a timber beam – usually linked by arches in the first case

Ashlar: the highest-quality masonry, with stone worked to a smooth squared finish, carefully jo inted and coursed

Baluster: in a stair, the upright member of a balustrade supporting the handrail

Bargeboard: fascia boards protecting the gabled ends of a plain gabled roof, usually attached to the ends of the purlins and wall-plates and in 16th-/17th-century work often richly carved

Bay: a structural unit. In timber frames the area between end and/or cross-frames In masonry structures, usually considered as the number of windows or openings in an elevation

Bay window: a window that projects from the wall-face, usually with straight or canted sides but sometimes curved

Beam: a horizontal structural timber (see Bridging; Girding; Spine)

Blade: a term often used for one of the two halves of a cruck frame

Bond: the manner in which bricks are laid. There are two basic types: English, based on alternating courses of stretchers and headers, or Flemish, based on variations of alternating stretchers and headers in the same course

Box frame: standard type of timber-framed construction of side and end timber frames, usually aligned in a rectangle of one or more bays, supporting the roof structure (see Cruck framing)

Brace: curved or diagonal timber stiffening a timber frame or the purlins in a roof structure, often with one end tenoned into a bay post and the other into a rail. Usually described by the manner in which they relate to the post – i.e. a down-brace runs down from it

Bracket: small and usually curved stiffening piece; in timber framing often supporting a bressumer and in masonry structures often decorative

Bratticing: decorative crenellation or castellation applied to an internally visible horizontal timber, usually a wall-plate

Bressumer: Technically any load-bearing lintel but generally used to refer to the bottom or sole plate of an overhanging upper section of framing, i.e. above a jetty

Brick nogging: in timber framing, brickwork used to infill panels, often replacing the original panel fills from the 18th century onwards

Bridging beam: a floor beam spanning from one side of a building to another with no framing or support beneath (as opposed to Spine Beam)

Buttery: one of the two usual service rooms attached to a medieval hall – used to

store the 'wet' goods

Buttress: thin attached masonry projection supporting an external wall, capable of being used as a decorative architectural feature as well as being often structurally necessary

Camber: the slight upward curve of a relatively level timber – such as a tie-beam or collar

Carcass: the main structural skeleton of a timber-framed building

Carpenters' marks: usually Roman numerals, used in order to ensure that the prefabricated parts of a timber-framed structure are reassembled in the correct manner. Can be very simple or surprisingly complex

Chamfer: cutting away of the angle of a timber or piece of masonry – ranging in complexity from a simple angled flat to very ornate mouldings

Chamfer stop: the end detail of a chamfer, again of varying complexity

Chimney piece: the technical term for the surround of a fireplace

Close-studding: type of timber framing using closely set vertical timbers. Unnecessarily elaborate and more for show – so often used only on the main elevations

Collar: an upper horizontal timber in a roof truss above the level of the tie-beam

Collar purlin: in a crown-post roof, the axial horizontal beam supporting the collars of the trussed rafter couples

Corbel: small projection, usually masonry, cantilevered out from the main wall face to support a beam or wall-post, for example

Cornice: in Classical architecture, the top order of an entablature; in common use, the decorative moulding in plaster, wood or stone at the top of a wall

Cross-mullioned: type of window with a cross-shaped pattern on a mullion and single transom

Crown post: the vertical post in a crown-post roof structure rising from a tie-beam and supporting a collar purlin

Crown-post roof: type of trussed rafter roof in which rafter couples linked by collars are supported by a central, axial/longitudinal, collar purlin supported by crown posts; distinct from a roof with trusses and side purlins

Cruck framing: simple frame formed by pairs of curving cruck blades – often cut from the same bough – linked by one or more collars in an 'A-frame' to form the basic structure to which the side frames and roof can be added

Cusp: small and often decorated curve-sided projection from the inner curve of an arch

Dado: in wainscot, the lower part or 'plinth' of the design, between the skirting board and the dado rail

Deal: generic name for the cheaper forms of wood used in building, especially for floorboards

Eaves: the undersides of the shallow projection of the sides of a roof

First-floor hall: a medieval building with the main living-space at first-floor level, as opposed to the commoner ground-floor open hall

Gable: the end of a roof, usually triangular but shapes can vary. By extension, often used for the narrow end of a building or wing

Garderobe: medieval and later term for a latrine, often in a separate projection from the main range

Girding beam: in a timber frame, a principal intermediate horizontal beam, usually at a principal floor level

Half-lapped: a joint in which the end of one timber is halved and slots into a waiting

recess of the same shape in another, unlike a standard mortise and tenon joint

Hall: the principal living space in a typical high-status medieval house, often a single-storey space open to the roof – hence open hall

Hipped roof: roof in which the ends are sloped down from the ends of the ridge to the actual end wall rather than ended vertically in line with the gable; the triangular-shaped slopes are termed the hips

Jamb: the sides of a window or doorway opening

Jetty; jettying: a form of timber framing in which an upper frame is set further out than the one beneath it – its bottom rail, or bressumer, being supported in a variety of ways by jetty joists and brackets

Joist: horizontal secondary timber forming part of a floor or ceiling structure

Jowl: the thickening of the top of a main post in order to maximise the 'meat' in the wood to take the various joints required by the wall-plates and trusses. Designs vary from gently thickened 'flared' jowls to more abrupt 'gun-stock' jowls

Keystone: the central top voussoirs in a masonry arch, also replicated, though structurally non-essential, in timber designs

King post: type of roof truss and roof form based on trusses with a central, vertical king post rising from the tie-beam to take the tops of the principal rafters

Lights: in windows, the number of gaps separated by the vertical mullions – hence two-light, three-light, etc.

Lintel: the head of a window or doorway opening

Mid-rail: in timber framing, a rail at half-storey height in both square and close-studded framing. It can interrupt, or be interrupted by, vertical studs

Mullion: the vertical upright member in a window opening

Newel: The main vertical spine of a spiral stair or 'vice'; newel posts are the principal upright members of a balustrade, usually at the landings

Open hearth: an unenclosed fire usually heating a medieval open hall, the smoke eventually exiting through a smoke louvre

Oriel: a bay window at an upper floor level projecting from the wall line

Ovolo: a convex moulding; also used for a series of such mouldings

Panels: the gaps between the timbers in a timber-framed building; also the infills between the main members of the framing of wainscot, doors and shutters

Pantry: one of the two main service rooms in a medieval house, where the 'dry' goods were kept. Usually next to the buttery

Parapet: low wall, solid or balustraded, on a wall top to hide the base of the roof or to protect a drop

Pitch: the angle of a roof

Plate: generic name for a main horizontal timber, especially at the bottom or top of a frame – hence sill-plate and wall-plate

Plinth: the base of a masonry wall or column, often projecting and topped by moulding

Post: in timber framing, a full-height principal vertical member at the corners or at the ends of the cross-frames

Purlin: a horizontal timber in the roof structure supporting the common rafters; there can be one or more 'tiers' of purlins in a side-purlin design

Queen post: type of roof and truss in which a pair of queen posts rise from a tie-beam to take the tops of the principal rafters; the heads of the queen posts are linked by a horizontal straining beam

Queen strut: type of truss in which there are two or more vertical queen struts (as opposed to posts) easing from a tie-beam to a collar

Quoin: selected brickwork or stonework at the corner of a building designed to

stiffen the angle; often used decoratively, though larger plain stones can be used even in rubblestone

Rafter: angled timber in a roof structure. Principal rafters form parts of trusses. Common rafters are thinner and are supported by the trusses and purlins and, in turn, support the roof cover

Reveal: the internal opening of a window or doorway.

Ridge: the top of a roof

Riser: the vertical part of a step

Rubble or rubblestone: the simplest form of masonry construction using little-worked or shaped blocks of stone – but the quality rises from random rubble through to worked and coursed rubble

Sash: type of sliding window opening, most commonly of vertically opened 'balanced' sashes. Simpler horizontal-sliding versions are sometimes called 'Yorkshire sashes'

Scantling: the thickness of a piece of building timber

Scarf joint: manner of joining together two timbers end-on, varying in complexity, commonly found in wall-plates and sill-beams

Screens passage: a cross-passage between opposing doorways in the side walls at the 'low' end of an open hall, usually between the main hall and the services and separated from the former, originally, by a moveable 'screen' that became more permanent over time

Sill: the base of a window opening, often projecting outwards

Smoke louvre: raised section projecting from the ridge of the roof of an open hall to take away the smoke from an open hearth – often timber-framed with slatted sides

Soffit: the underside, especially of a timber or arch

Solar: the traditional upper chamber at one end of a medieval hall used as the private quarters of the family; gives its name to the solar wing at the 'high end' of the hall

Sole plate: a horizontal timber forming the lowest part of a timber frame; also known as a sill beam

Spandrel: the curve-sided area above the sides of an arch, often an opportunity for decoration

Spine beam: centrally positioned longitudinal beam supporting the inward ends of floor joists

Springing: the place from which an arch begins, or 'springs'

String course: projecting narrow horizontal feature on the outside of a masonry wall, usually at an upper floor level; also, when very plain, called a band course

Strut: a vertical, or slightly angled, timber not as significant as a post. In a truss, a pair of angled struts above a collar are often termed 'V-struts'

Stud: a secondary vertical timber in a timber frame; usually not full height, unlike a post

Tie-beam: the horizontal beam at the base of a truss, usually spanning from wall-plate to wall-plate.

Transom: a horizontal intermediate member of a window

Tread: the horizontal part of a stair or step

Trimmer: a timber, usually horizontal, around an opening in a floor – such as a stair hole or around a chimney breast

Truss: principal structural member in most forms of roof construction, usually supporting purlins

Voussoir: specially shaped brick or stone used, in series, to form the ring of an arch

Wainscot: term used for the panelling of a room

Wattle and daub: standard form of panel infills in timber framing, usually the daub added to a 'wattle' of twigs or laths woven into a series of upright staves

Weather boarding: externally applied and usually horizontal overlapping timber planking, often used on timber-framed buildings, either if repairs are needed, or, from the 18th century, for the original covering

Wind-brace: straight or curved brace from truss to purlin in roof structures to prevent racking; can be richly decorated in high-status buildings

Bibliography

Abbreviations

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CHAU	City of H ereford Archaeological Unit
HAS	Herefordshire Archaeology Series (City of Hereford Archaeological Unit report series)
TWNFC	*Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club*
VCH	Victoria County History (The Victoria History of the Counties of England)

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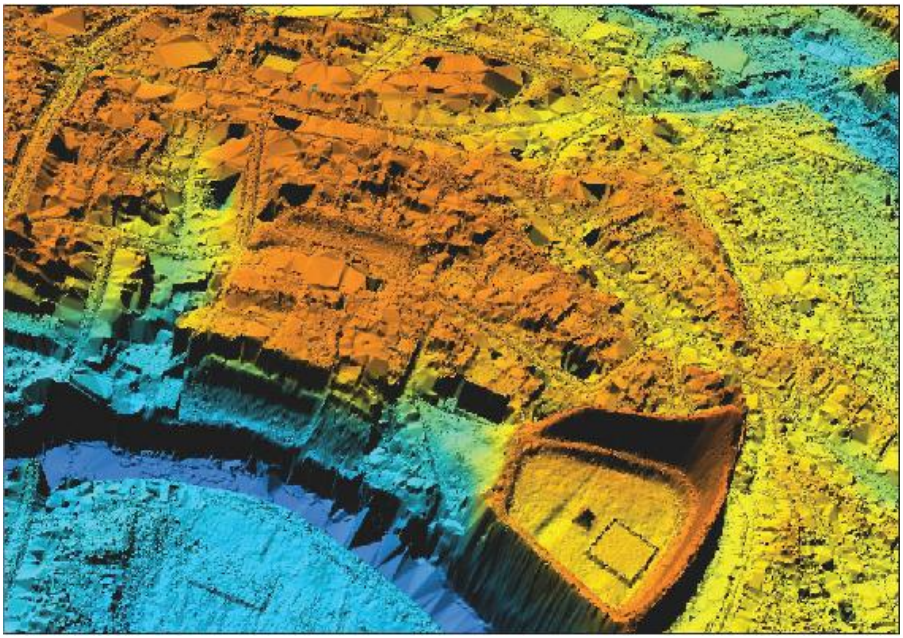

Plate 1 LiDAR image of the site of the historic centre of Hereford. This aerial laser scan of the ground surface, from which buildings have been digitally removed, exaggerates altitudes and shows the arc of the city walls containing the triangular road junction adjoining High Town. The Saxon town appears as the raised ground on its south side; the surviving earthworks of the castle appear bottom right

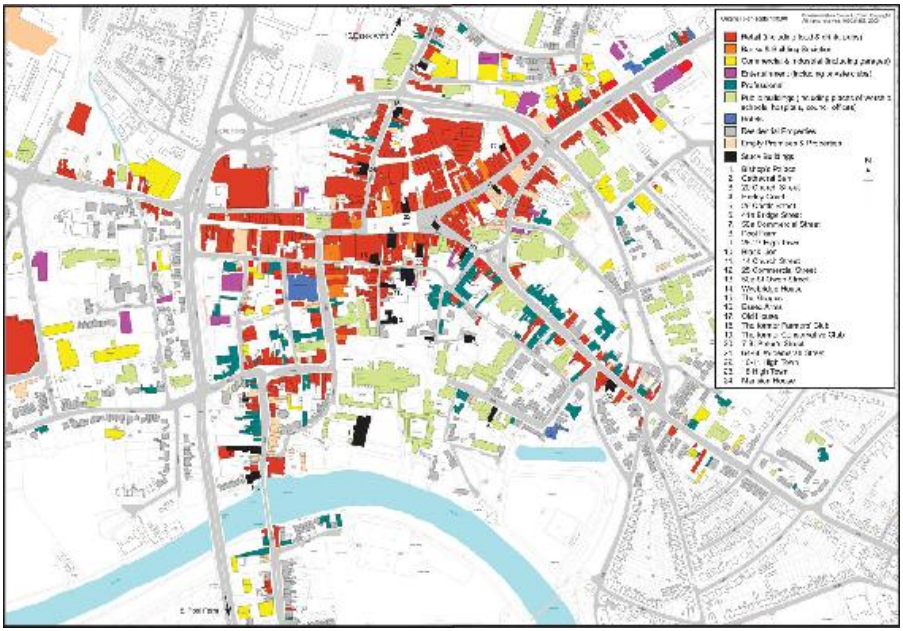

Plate 2 Plan of central Hereford showing modern land-uses (recorded 2009). The distinction between the red/orange (commerce) and the green/grey (public/professional) is a not inaccurate reflection of the difference between Norman and pre-Norman Hereford

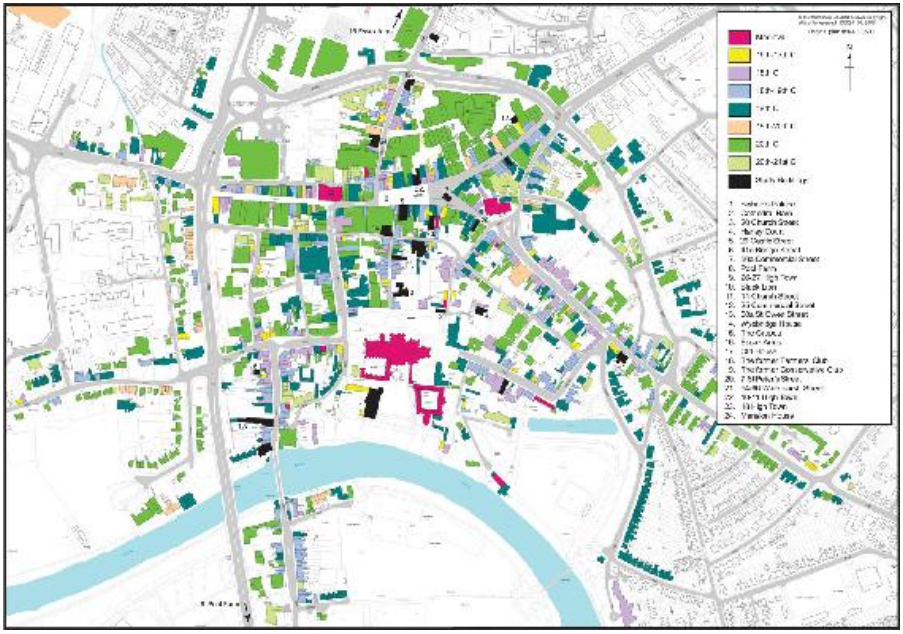

Plate 3 Plan of central Hereford showing the date of buildings. Based on incomplete information, such a map is likely to seriously under-estimate the extent to which historic fabric survives in the city

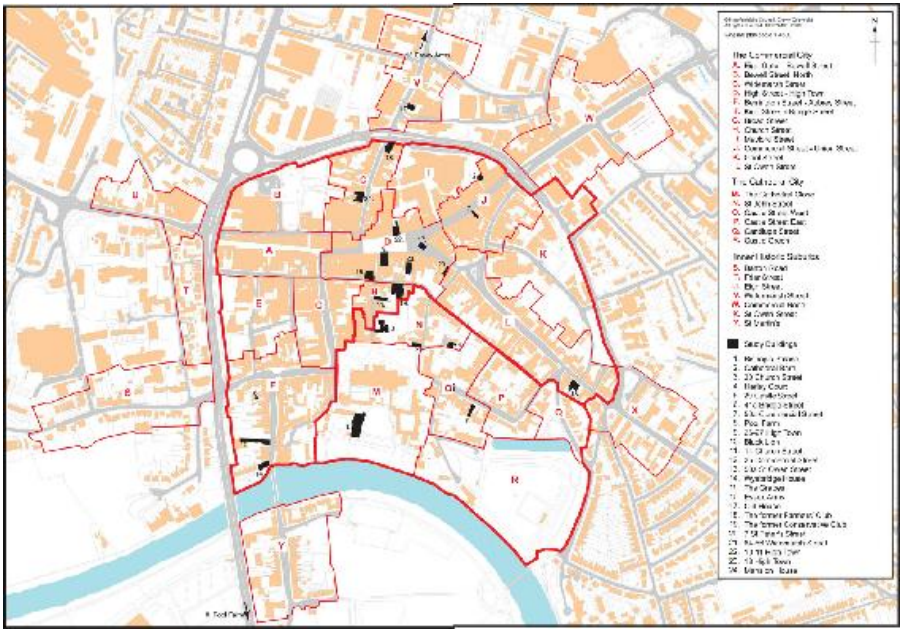

Plate 4 Plan of central Hereford showing 'neighbourhoods' or townscape character areas *reflecting street-by-street variations in physical, economic and historical character*

Plate 5 A surviving bay of the eastern arcade of the Bishop of Hereford's Great Hall (Building 1), preserved at loft-level in the present palace (2011)

Plate 6 Detail of the arcade in the Bishop's Palace showing the top of an aisle post and the decorated brace to the arcade plate; the 'nail-head' type decoration is, appropriately, not carved in the wood but made up of a series of short sections nailed in place. To the left is a later infill frame and truss on the bay division, partly supported by one of the original capitals of a colonette on the inward side of the posts. Floral decoration can be seen on the aisle plate

Plate 7 The Cathedral Barn (Building 2) from the south-east. To its right is the frontage of 3 St John Street, a canonical house, and in the left background is another, the Precentor's House

Plate 8 No 20 Church Street (Building 3), the first-floor hall, as restored, looking east towards the high end

Plate 9 No 20 Church Street (Building 3), detail of one of the crown posts in an intermediate truss. Note the red wash applied to the primary timbers

Plate 10 No 20 Church Street (Building 3), the original timber window in the south wall lighting the high end of the hall

Plate 11 Harley Court (Building 4), the open hall, looking east towards the probable high end of the hall

Plate 12 Harley Court (Building 4). Detail of the roof construction showing the slender pierced and cusped windbraces and the remains of crenellation or bratticing applied to the wall-plate
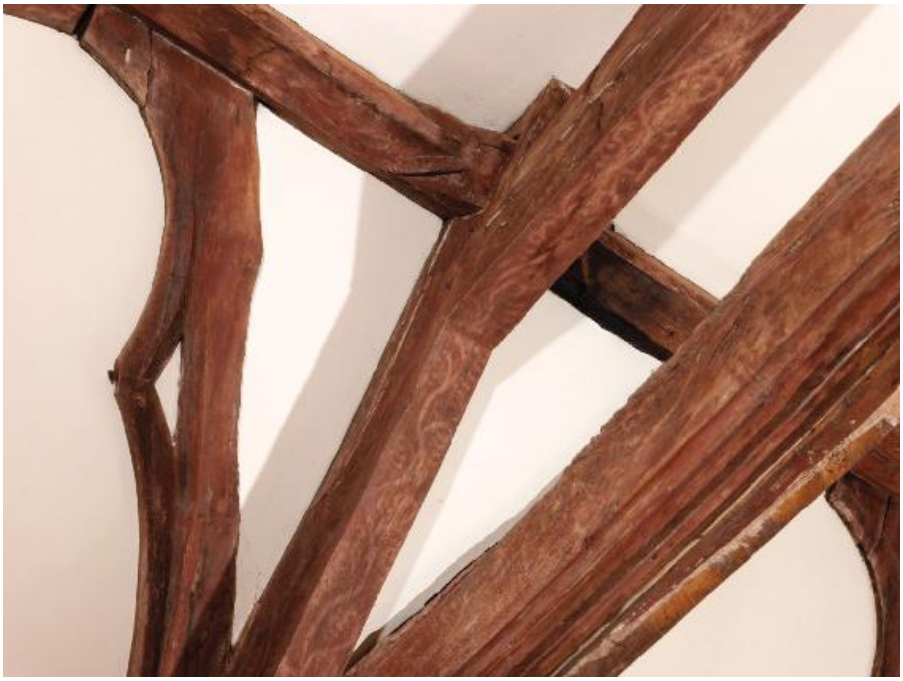
Plate 13 Harley Court (Building 4), detail of the hall roof showing traces of painted vine-scroll decoration on the soffits of the principal rafter and collar

Plate 14 No 29 Castle Street (Building 5) the former hall of the Vicars' Choral. The courtyard (east) side of the hall with original openings and buttresses and a later fireplace belonging to a demolished wing enclosing the entrance

Plate 15 The east gable end, the surviving medieval solar wing, of 41a Bridge Street (Building 6). Looking west, down the passageway, from the street frontage

Plate 16 The street frontage of Pool Farm (Building 8). The cusped braces of the medieval hall can be seen in the gable end; the porch of 1624 covers the doorway into the cross-passage. The slightly later cross-wing at the opposite end accommodated services and a probable kitchen

Plate 17 The High Town frontage of Building 9: 26 High Town, left, 27 High Town, right

Plate 18 The Black Lion (Building 10), general view in 2016 of the Commandment Room on the first floor of the central range; looking east

Plate 19 The Black Lion, Commandment Room, the fireplace and overmantle

Plate 20 The Black Lion, Commandment Room. One of the early 17th-century painted scenes depicting the breaking of the Ten Commandments, rediscovered in 1932. This panel, on the north wall, refers to the Seventh Commandment (Thou shalt not commmit adultery)

Plate 21 14 Church Street (Building 11): the restored frontage in 2016

Plate 22 Wyebridge House; the river frontage in 2016. Building 14 occupies the central, slightly set back, section of this elevation

Plate 23 The Grapes. The East Street (south) elevation of Building 15, seen from Church Street. The basic jettied character was recreated when the building was restored, based on the detailed archaeological recording.

Plate 24 The Old House, High Town (Building 17); the view from the southwest, c. *the late 1980s*

Plate 25 The former Farmers' Club (Building 18), viewed from the northwest, 2016. The stone-gabled corner facing the camera represents the patching-up of the facade after the removal of the medieval Widemarsh Gate. City-wall masonry accounts for much of the fabric of the left-hand elevation, interrupted by Thomas Church's doorway of 1626

Plate 26 The former Conservative Club (Building 19): the west elevation of the surviving wing of a mansion built by a wealthy brewer in the 16th century, to which a gabled attic storey was added in the 17th

Plate 27 The projecting north-east corner of 7 St Peter's Street (Building 20). A classic glimpse of a re-fronted but not quite encapsulated timber frame

Plate 28 The frontage of 10–11 High Street (Monsoon) in 2016

Plate 29 The Mansion House, Widemarsh Street. The earliest brick house known to survive in Hereford, it was built in the late 1690s. The shop-fronts are an unsympathetic insertion of the early 20th century